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DRAWN BY  
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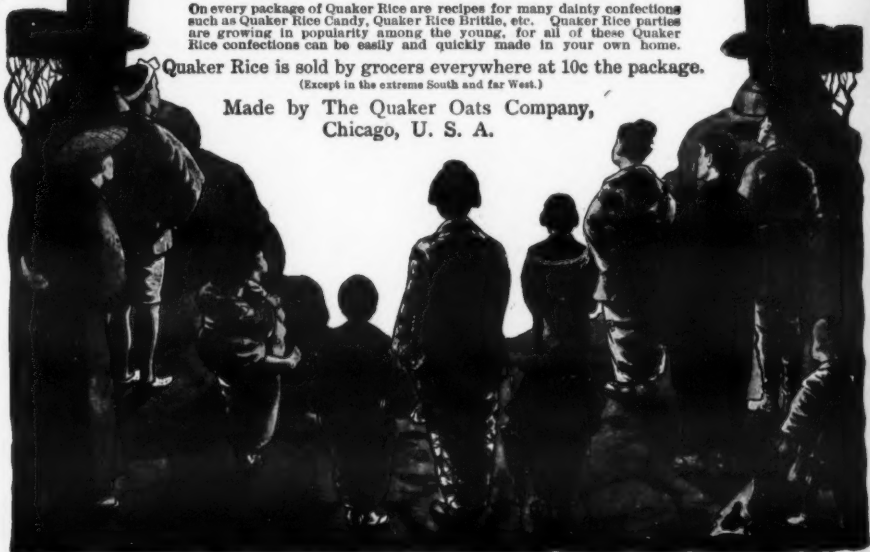
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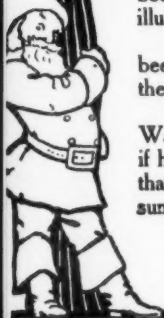
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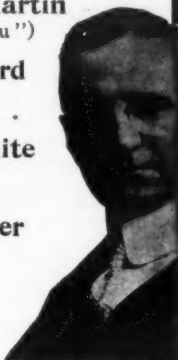
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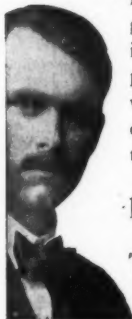
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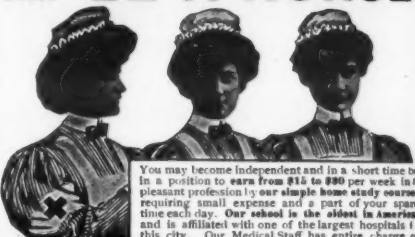
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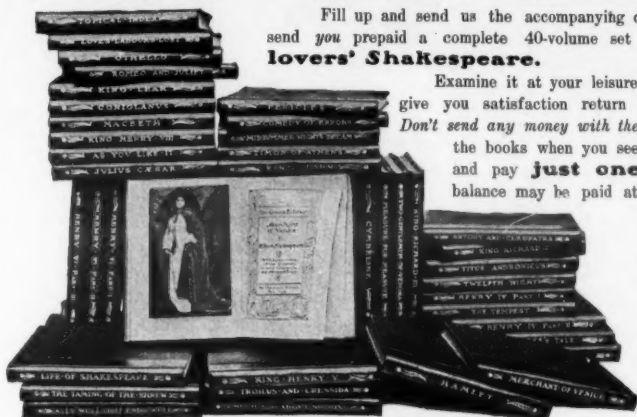
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VOL. XVIII

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# AINSLIE'S

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DECEMBER, 1906.

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## The DARLING of a DOWAGER

By Miriam Michelson



It was just a week after the surprisingly successful performance of Rostand's "Romanesques" for the benefit of the Haven of Mercy for Incurable Children that Mrs. Cortelyou, its chief patroness, gave a luncheon to the members of the cast—all of whom, by the way, enjoyed the distinction of being related to her, though more or less distantly.

Mrs. Cortelyou, of course, had been promptly shocked at the idea of her own nieces and her grandniece, her second and third cousins and her granddaughter taking part in a public theatrical performance. She was appeased when she heard that no men were to appear in the cast; and then was outraged to discover that if men did not take the masculine rôles, women must.

She held a sort of preliminary dress-rehearsal before she finally consented to countenance the production. Flora Chrétien, looking very winsome in peach-colored breeches and silver-embroidered coat, and feeling infinitely more self-conscious than she did the night she made so great a success of

*Percinet's* rôle, tried on her costume for Mrs. Cortelyou and blushing bore that stout, stern little lady's inspection through an emerald-studded, old silver lorgnette. Kate Cortelyou, the emancipated Kate, brave in outspoken acknowledgment of her thirty years, winced and flinched on the stage of her aunt's boudoir, with that uncompromising, cool old eye to judge and appraise her. Kate was cast for the part of *Straforel*, and the spectacle of this doughty spinster (whose tongue every social pretender in Philadelphia feared) compelled to doff the bravo's cloak and squirming in breeches and doublet before the Censor, sent Flora Chrétien whirling into the bedroom, hysterically trying to stifle her giggles. Later, of course, on that fateful night when the Haven was made richer by some thousands of dollars, Kate swore and swaggered with a verve and a naturalness that made the bravo's rôle second in effectiveness only to *Percinet's* own.

It never occurred to Mrs. Cortelyou to haul Beatrix Tettlow up before her improvised Court of Propriety. Trix played *Sylvette*, and in skirts there is safety, Trix's grandmother would have declared, had she thought the matter

over. But she didn't till the wilfullest of all her connections burst upon her sight the night of the performance. And then it was too late; only then Mrs. Cortelyou realized how modest a costume was the dress for *men* under Louis Quinze.

But when she ascertained the sum the girls' performance had netted, Mrs. Cortelyou forgave even Trix—though she did place Flora Chrétien at the head of the table that day at luncheon—and after providing a menu such as only Mrs. Cortelyou's chef could concoct, and souvenirs that were charmingly appropriate and remindful of that one great night last week, she graciously left the small company to itself.

It was when the door had closed behind the old lady that Flora Chrétien leaned forward. Her eyes were shy and bright, and they flitted birdlike from face to face, as though seeking the most sympathetic expression to light upon.

"Girls," she said, "I have something—serious to tell you."

"Flora!" gasped Miss Cortelyou. And then bruskiy: "Who's the man? Tell us that."

"The man?" Beatrix Tettlow's shrill voice became audible above the delighted murmur of Miss Chrétien's friends. "Why, it's Trotter Tettlow, of course. I always said I was lucky. Fancy having Flo for one's own sister-in-law! Dear old Trotter—when did he dare to ask you, Flo?"

"Hush, Trix!" Kate Cortelyou spoke peremptorily. She had so long assumed an air of authority that none among her relatives of the younger generation now questioned it. "Flora Chrétien isn't fool enough to marry a chump like Trotter Tettlow. He's just the right gage for Millicent, here. As for—"

"I'm extremely obliged, I'm sure," lisped little Millicent Trotter sarcastically.

"Not at all—not at all!" Kate Cortelyou waved a large, fine hand airily. "Nobody else would have him. Now, don't you get saucy, Trix. You know that wild horses wouldn't drag you to

the altar if a husband like your brother Trot awaited you there. I'd sooner believe, Flora, that it's that actor fellow Shaw, who acted as stage-manager last Saturday—"

"Order! Order!" Miss Chrétien tapped the side of her glass with the souvenir bracelet Mrs. Cortelyou had put beside her place. In it was set a miniature of her grandniece in *Percinet's* costume. "How can you squabble, girls, when—"

"Who is he?" came in a chorused demand from every voice at the table. "Show us your ring."

"He— isn't." Miss Chrétien laughed and blushed. "It isn't anything like that, and your guesses are only a humiliating confession that there's but one thing women think about—I'm going to work, girls."

A disappointed hush fell upon the pretty table. Miss Cortelyou broke it.

"Upon my soul, Flora Chrétien," she spoke disapprovingly, "I expected something original of you. Well, just keep out of the coal business. I warn you I've got a monopoly there."

"And out of the employment offices," added Martha Trotter. "Millicent and I just barely make our yearly trip abroad collecting toll on incoming and outgoing maids. You won't cut into our trade, will you, Flo?"

Miss Chrétien shook her head.

"Nor into mine?" Mary Grantham interjected. "Trade is beastly—just beastly. Since this silly fashion of shirt-waist suits is in, I'm nearly ruined. I never could make a skirt. Frankly, now—I shouldn't admit it to anybody else but you girls—I haven't made a blouse for any one this side of Market Street in moons. It's the female bounders from the north side that come to me because they want to brag to their friends that they have a blouse made by a Cortelyou-Grantham. I tell you I make them pay well for that brag—but not well enough to support another shop, Flo," she added appealingly.

Miss Chrétien laid a hand reassuringly upon her cousin's.

"Don't you worry, Mary, I couldn't



make a blouse if I would. I say, Trix," she added, turning to the blond bit of animated Dresden china that sat on her left esconced in bubbling laces and chiffons and eating her ice with almost infantile absorption, "haven't you any keep-off-the-grass signs to point out to me?"

Beatrice Cortelyou Tettlow, only daughter of Banker Tettlow and sole heiress to her millionaire grandmama's wealth, shook her head.

"No—but I'll never forgive you if you don't go on the stage. I was never made love to so deliciously——"

"The stage! You're crazy, Trix, and a baby, besides!" Kate Cortelyou's indignant exclamation was worthy the most conventional of her ancestors—and conventional is really what Miss Cortelyou, behind the mask of her masculine occupation, her free use of strong language, and her thoroughgoing independence, was at heart. "Flora," there was a doubtful accent to her voice, though her words did not betray it, "you've surely not got anything so silly in your head?"

Flora looked at her a moment before she spoke.

"No, Kate," she said slowly, "I haven't got it in my head."

"I thought you had too much sense," said Miss Cortelyou, relieved. "The Missis would cut you dead, you know, and the rest of us would have to then, of course. She could forgive me coal, and Martha her maids, and Mary Grantham shirt-waists. She even has partly overlooked your Aunt Isabella's miniature soap-factory in her bedroom, by being nice to you. But, in spite of her accepting a nickname from you and actually becoming proud of it, in spite of your being her white-haired boy and the rest of us only just relations, if a Chrétien went on the stage——"

"Yes, if a Chrétien went on the stage?" Flora leaned forward. Her cheeks were flushed, but her eyes were steady.

"But you said you hadn't any such idea in your head!"

"I said I haven't. I had once. And I could get rid of it in only one way.

That way"—with an impulsive gesture Flora Chrétien put out both her hands—"that way was to yield to it. It's no longer in my head, it's in my heart now, and when it gets that far down," she said, with a tremulous laugh, "you can never get it out again! Girls, I'm to leave town to-morrow with the 'Betsey Ross' Company, to be gone perhaps a year. Oh, do—do wish me luck!" she cried. "I'm so frightened—and so happy!"

She almost sobbed the last words, and the tears in her excited eyes brought sympathetic drops to Beatrice Tettlow's fun-loving gray ones; while Kate Cortelyou grasped her hand and said huskily: "Brace up, Flora, there must be some way out of it."

"But I don't want any way out of it. I want to get deeper and deeper into it. It haunts me all day—the tang and chance and excitement of it—and at night I dream, like the mad thing I am, that all the work's done, and all that's left for me to do is to drink down the sweet of it. Oh, girls, don't—don't pity me. Even if I fail, think—I'll have had my chance!"

"I'd rather it'd been coal, a good sight rather," declared Miss Cortelyou, shaking her hand gloomily.

"Shirt-waist suits may go out again, Flo. Styles like that never last more than a couple of seasons. Then when blouses——" began Mary Grantham.

"Oh, hush, you dear croakers!" Flora seized her glass and sprang to her feet. "I drink to the success of Flora Chrétien, a girl who's had the pleasantest things in girl life and found them mightily pleasant, but who'd give away everything she's had or might have with both hands a dozen times over, for the one thing which a man named Braun says is straight ahead of her! I dare you not to drink with me."

"Here's to you, Flo—Trix Tettlow never took a dare." Mrs. Cortelyou's only granddaughter stood beside her.

"Of course, we want you to succeed, dear, but——" Martha Trotter got to her feet a bit clumsily, as she did most things, and pulled her sister Millicent with her.

"No 'buts.' My best wishes, Flo!" Mary Grantham went over gracefully to the majority. "Come, Kate, what's the use?" With a persuasive hand she patted Miss Cortelyou's shoulder.

Miss Cortelyou rose slowly to her feet. Disapproval, even disgust, was in her face; but there was, too, an almost motherly pride and fondness for this little cousin of hers, the one girl of her set who never felt the sting of Kate Cortelyou's sharp tongue.

"Who in Heaven's name is this man named Braun?" she asked miserably.

A shout of laughter righted the emotional balance of the table.

"Let's all sit down," Flora's voice was gay with triumph, "and I'll tell you."

And, forgetting all about her toast and her wine—as did all the other girls except Miss Cortelyou, who drank her glass down with the steady hand and head of the accustomed—she plunged into her story.

"Mr. Braun, in the first place, Kate, is in the syndicate. There's a theatrical trust, you know, as well as a coal trust; and Mr. Isadore Braun ranks there just about where Mr. Ogden Tettlow ranks in coal. And if Trix's Uncle Ogden were to say some morning to the boy that blacks his boots, 'Come in and I'll make a coal billionaire of you some day,' that boy wouldn't feel a mite more flattered than Flora Chrétien did one afternoon at the Bellevue last week, when this little man Braun looked her over out of two twinkling blue eyes and said cheekily: 'I like your style, Miss Kreton. You're a good dresser and a good looker. We'll make sumpin' of you.'"

"Insulting beast!" Kate Cortelyou brought her fist down disgustedly upon the table. "He ought to be horse-whipped. How in the name of all that's decent did you permit an animal like that to talk to you?"

"Permit? Permit, is it? I didn't permit—I would have begged! He was—buying my coal, in a way, Kate," Flora coaxed. "One's customers haven't all of them the advantages Mrs. Cortelyou's relations might have."

But Kate set down her glass exasperated.

"Come, now, Kate, don't be foolish. Take the man for what he is," Flora expostulated. "He didn't mean to be nasty. He thought he was being very nice, and that was only his way of saying: 'Oh, I say, Flo, that's a stunning frock! Why don't Trix dress like you?'"

"That nasty little Trotter!" exclaimed Miss Tettlow, recognizing the fraternal touch.

Miss Cortelyou sighed. "We've spoiled you, the lot of us; it's all our fault, mine as much as anybody else's. If I'd sat down hard on your mimicking people and frowned down this plaguey theatrical craze of yours in the very beginning, it——"

"It wouldn't have made the least difference in the world, you dear Kate, if once Mr. Isadore Braun had held up one of his thick, little bediamonded fingers——"

"Horrible!" Miss Cortelyou shuddered.

"——and said 'Come.'"

"And did he?" questioned Miss Tettlow eagerly. "How did he happen to?"

"He was in the box that night, the night of the 'Romanesques.'" Miss Chrétien picked her conversational steps a bit more carefully now.

"He was? Why didn't you tell us?" demanded a chorus of the cast.

"I—didn't know," faltered Miss Chrétien, "till afterward, after it was all over."

"And who told you then?" Kate Cortelyou's keen black eyes, detecting the girl's slight embarrassment, became inquisitorial.

"Why, Mr. Shaw," answered Flora, in the tone of surprised innocence.

"Oh!" Miss Cortelyou sat back. "I understand."

"Now, Kate Cortelyou——"

"Now, Flora Chrétien," returned Miss Cortelyou, with spirit, shaking her coffee-spoon in her chum's confused face, "Oliver Shaw brought him there just to see you play *Percinet*. Don't you ever be such a ninny as to fancy that you can fool me—or anybody else."

You've the most transparent face that was ever pasted on to a silly girl's body to give her away. You simply can't lie. And you've a voice that cries 'It's a fib—it's a fib!' whenever your words try to deceive. Why, your whole self is a give-away and——"

"Exactly what said one Mr. Isadore Braun!" interjected Flora, in a gay mixture of confession and delighted malice.

"The impudence of him!" gasped Miss Cortelyou.

"Oh, he didn't put it as nicely as you have, Kate. He only said: 'Say, Shaw—Mr. Shaw was there, having at my request arranged the interview, of course——'"

"Of course!" agreed Miss Cortelyou ironically.

Flora looked aggrieved, but she went on without other comment.

"Say, Shaw," he said, 'she's all right about what she ought to do. Her head's level there. Most of 'em want to be *Cleopatras*. But she's got the baby ways and the goo-goo eyes for an ingénue to beat the band, a swell ingénue, the Vere-de-Vere kind, hey?"

"And did that man Shaw, after our having treated him as though he were a gentleman, did he sit there in silence and let you be insulted in his presence?" demanded Miss Cortelyou hotly.

"He didn't sit in silence," admitted Miss Chretien gingerly. "He spoke."

"What did he say?"

Flora glanced up to measure the degree of determination behind that voice.

"What did he say?" repeated Miss Cortelyou.

"He said, you bully," Miss Chretien's eyes were cowards and evaded a direct look, but her voice trembled with a suggestion of a giggle, "he said 'O level-headed maiden that knows what she wants and doesn't want the tragedy moon! A mere starship will content her, a comfortably twinkling small starship for the present, nothing sensotional' — sensational," corrected Flora, stumbling and recovering quickly.

But every back about the round-table had stiffened.

"Oh, if you're going to mimic the Missis, her very self!" began Millicent Trotter.

"I'm not—I'm not!" cried Flora quickly. "It was a mere slip, I assure you. How in the world should Oliver Shaw know the Missis' word with which she puts things forever beyond the pale? Come, girls, don't sit there looking like an inquest sitting on my failings. You make me feel like an outsider—already. As if I hadn't precisely as good a right to be angry at anybody who ridiculed her as you have! Won't you listen to the rest of it—do!" she coaxed.

And Flora Chretien's was a special way of coaxing that had always had a magical effect upon her hearers' spines, Beatrix Tettlow used to say. Beatrix was the first to yield to her curiosity. She slipped a forgiving little hand into Miss Chretien's and murmured eagerly: "Go on. What else did Oliver Shaw say about you?"

Flora squeezed the hand and held it. "He said: 'Do you know, Braun, what's a new thing to do? To write a play about an ingénue, indirectly staring her, you see. Now, wait a minute,' he hurried on as Braun lifted a mocking shoulder and twirled his red-gold little beard insinuatingly, 'of course, I mean to write the play, but you don't have to produce it, you know, if you don't want to. Somebody else will, and they'll take Miss Chretien away from you, too, to play it. I've got the scheme for it in the back of my head, and by the time——' 'By the time,' Braun broke in, 'by the time we've got our ingénue licked into shape——'"

"Licked into shape!" Kate Cortelyou set down her cup in disgust.

"It must shock you, Kate," said Flora slyly. "Strong language always did!"

"But 'licked'——" began Kate, with a groan.

"Oh, never mind that!" cried Beatrix, absorbed, "go on, go on. But aren't you going to play *Juliet*? I'm

sure Mr. Shaw thinks you can play *Juliet*."

"Are you, dear? I wish I were. He only said: 'By that time I'll have the play ready. Then it'll be up to you to say yes or no to it. But think of it in the meantime. What's the prettiest, the most taking thing on the stage—or off it, in the whole world, for that matter—tell me that? Isn't it youth? And what's the most fetching sort of youth? Why, feminine youth, of course. Girl—girl—girl! That's the lay to set the hearts of your audience beating and to sing their dollars into your purse, Braun. First youth, and then girl. And then beauty. And then innocence. And then the aureole of sweldom. And then the glory of piquant individuality. And last, a set of circumstances that will make this girl do the unusual thing in an unusual way. There, Mr. Isadore Braun, if I get all that into a play, a play for an ingénue, and our ingénue——'"

"Our ingénue—he said *our*, Flora?"

"He—was a bit excited," responded Miss Chrétien demurely. "They get enthusiastic—people like that, you know, and——"

"How do *you* know?" demanded Miss Cortelyou.

"Why, haven't we seen a great deal of Mr. Shaw while he was getting us ready for 'Les Romanesques'?"

"You have, evidently. And this red-gold Brown of yours, or is it Brown gold?" Miss Cortelyou questioned sarcastically. "I suppose he smashed his thick-fingered fist on the table and cried: 'Damme, she's my ingénue, not yours!' Eh?"

"Mr. Braun, who is a blond, slim, dapper, excessively neat little dandy, never swears, Kate." Miss Chrétien spoke reprovingly. "But he did bring his fist down all a-sparkle with diamonds and cry: 'There's money in that idea, Shaw. I'll read your play when the company gets back, and meantime I advise you to study Chr—to study—to——'" Miss Chrétien stumbled, and in a moment Kate Cortelyou had pounced upon her.

"To study what?" she catechized.

"Now—out with it, Flora. No fibbing. Study what?"

Miss Chrétien looked up appealingly. Her blue eyes had the timidity of a child's, but her shoulders were shaking with anticipatory laughter.

"Not 'what,' Kate—'whom,'" she corrected, watching Miss Cortelyou's face closely. "He said: 'I'd advise you to study Kreton here and get on—to—her curves!'"

"Kreton" herself was lying back in her chair helpless with laughter by the time she had achieved the expression. Miss Cortelyou sat speechless, her spoon caught in mid-air, her features fixed in disgust.

"And what did he say to that—Mr. Shaw?" greedily demanded Beatrix Tettlow, her interest in the narrative overshadowing every other feeling.

But what the young manager and dramatist had said, Miss Chrétien was determined not to divulge; and, despite the softness of her nature, which Miss Cortelyou knew and imposed upon, there were evidently resources at her command when occasion demanded. She pushed back her chair.

"Girls, it's late," she said, rising. "We must go in to Aunt Eunice, now. But before we go—come, the toast you didn't drink."

"You're a fool, a perfect imbecile!" said Miss Cortelyou, grasping the glass Flora filled.

"You're a darling, lovable thing, even if you won't play *Juliet*," cried Trix Tettlow, lifting her glass, her eyes ablaze with excitement.

"Aunt Eunice never in the world will let you do it, and she's been kinder to you than to all of us put together," said Martha Trotter, mournfully sipping her wine.

"And I know you'll be sorry," added Millicent, who was her sister's corollary.

"But we love you, dear, and when you come back to us——"

"Here's to you, Kreton!" cried Trix, interrupting Miss Grantham.

Kate Cortelyou shuddered, but she drank the toast down.

Just as they put their glasses back

upon the table, old Mrs. Cortelyou came sailing in. She looked about the table, with its pretty decorations, and the girls in their light gowns who were its chief ornament. Pretty girls were Mrs. Cortelyou's fad, her one dissipation, particularly pretty girls who had the good taste to be related to her. She fell in love, Trix Tettlow used to say of her grandmother, with every débutante who was lovely, and carried her off to live her first season with her; but she fell out of love again if the girl married during her first season or if she didn't; for in either case she was no longer a débutante. So far, there had been but one exception to this rule.

"You've had a nice time? I'm glad, Flora," she said, tapping the girl's cheek with an affectionate old hand, "you are ablaze with something; what is it?"

Flora Chrétien put an arm about the old lady's waist, and gave the haughty Mrs. Cortelyou an irreverent hug that might have accounted for her favorite-ship.

"I think, Missis—I'm going to be an actress—some day."

Mrs. Cortelyou's fifty-eight inches suddenly asserted themselves.

"I've been very fond of you, Flora," she said slowly. "You know I never kept another girl with me over her second season, and you've been with me three years. I shall always be fond of you—but don't be—vulgar, dear. It's neither clever nor funny; it's merely sensioisonal!"

And her white head very erect, she led the way to the drawing-room. The girls followed in silence in her wake, and she dismissed them there, saying, like the affectionate autocrat she was:

"Now, go up-stairs, every one of you, and lie down till the dinner-bell rings. I want you all blooming for the ball to-night."

## II.

As she stood in the finely carved doorway watching the dancers, Mrs. Cortelyou fanned herself. It was a slow, deliberate motion which, in so

short and stout a woman, might have been ungraceful if it had not been for the majesty that accompanied it.

It was very warm, and the woman to whom she was speaking was fanning herself, also. She, too, was stout and white-haired, though not so short as the little old lady beside whom she stood. Yet her added inches and the magnificence of her costume could not lend her the perfect poise of the older woman. For she was merely Mrs. Peyton Cortelyou Tettlow. Whereas, Mrs. Cortelyou is Mrs. Cortelyou.

There has never been another of just that name, though Philadelphia is justly proud of Mrs. Harvey Southwell Cortelyou, annually the best-dressed woman (New York women being barred as sartorial professionals) at the Horse Show on Wissahickon Heights; of Mrs. R. Jason Cortelyou, whose week-ends at Cortelyou out on the Willowgrove Road had the approval of Lord Harold Gray, when his lordship was last in America; of Mrs. Dick Chrétien Cortelyou, whose motor teas at Fairmount Park have become famous; and of Mrs. Bertie Beach Cortelyou, whose yacht, *La Cygne*, has a salon decorated by Herveille—it was Herveille, wasn't it, who did the Sultan of Turkey's?

But neither Mrs. Jason's week-ends nor her sisters-in-law's and cousins' toilets and social functions have quite the approval of Mrs. Cortelyou. To be sure, one cannot very well disapprove a Cortelyou, even by marriage; but between the depths of Mrs. Cortelyou's demi-disapproval and the dizzy elevation of her toleration, there is room for all the hope and despair that ambitious feminine breasts may hold. And it were better to be dead socially, to live north of Market Street and be done with it, than to be wholly disapproved by that lady; while to be worthy her esteem, to be admitted to the holy of holies of intimacy with her is to be lifted to those heights whence "the view of the misery of the damned," as the great Jonathan Edwards expressed it, "will double the ardor of the love and gratitude of the

saints in heaven." Nay, more than double, if one can credit the learned Doctor Bellamy who, by scientific and philosophical calculation, found out that the "happiness of the blessed in heaven would be increased nine billion six hundred million times on account of the misery of the damned." He didn't say socially—an oversight, probably.

Yet there have been cases when Mrs. Cortelyou's smile has been followed by Mrs. Cortelyou's frown; cruel instances when those who had once danced in the sunshine of her approval and her oval ballroom, modeled after the Orange Salle of the House in the Woods, have been ruthlessly relegated to outer darkness for all a social eternity. It was with such a case that she was dealing at present.

"I think it can be very easily done, my dear," she was saying, under her breath, to Beatrix's stepmother, calmly issuing her decrees between slow waves of her fan, "while I am abroad. We'll be gone quite eight months, I think, myself and the two girls, Flora and Beatrix. You'll give your usual golf-dance next month; he must not have an invitation to that, of course. Then there will be Bertie Beach's reception and dance on the *Cygne* after the races; she will leave him out of that. Mrs. R. Jason has already invited him to Cortelyou for several week-ends, but after the first one she will find a way to prevent his coming. Of course, Mrs. Dick can't prevent his motoring in the park when she does, but his absence from these other affairs will be remarked, so that it will be quite the natural thing when I revise the list for the Assembly, after my return, that his name should be omitted. Let me impress upon you, my dear, that it must all be done very, very quietly—no gossip, nothing like that, nothing sensational. Above all, you yourself must appear to be ignorant of it all; defend him gently when people begin to notice that he is being ostracized and seek an opportunity to say hard things of him. Then no one will connect Beatrix with the matter, you see. He himself must hardly realize what is being done.

If he did, Beverly Surryline is quite capable of following us over to the other side. He carried off his wife, poor Agatha Grantham, from under her father's very nose; and you remember that Grace Weston affair—the reckless way he defied the woman's husband. Well, remember the one thing that would set the match to Beatrix's feather head would be such a man's open pursuit and my being admittedly on guard and afraid of him. As it is, she'll forget him for the first handsome foreigner she sees. You may count on me on the other side, and I rely upon you at home here, Charlotte."

"You may—utterly, dear Mrs. Cortelyou," Mrs. Tettlow assured her. It never occurred to the mother of a debutante in whom Mrs. Cortelyou was interested, to assert her prerogative or take the initiative where her daughter was concerned. "But, after all, is it Trix—or is it Flora? At the supper he gave the night of the performance, you remember, he left Trix entirely to that actor-fellow—I forget his name—who managed the affair. He—Beverly, I mean—seemed positively to have taken leave of his senses. He couldn't take his eyes off Flora."

"H'm!" Mrs. Cortelyou's fan waved in awful dignity. "That was because of the costume she wore and the—the sensational theatrical part of it. And because Flora, too, was unlike herself that night, and more like Trix gone mad than I've ever seen her. A quiet summer with me abroad will do them both good."

"I quite agree with you. But I did hear him tell Flora myself," resumed Mrs. Tettlow a shade resentfully, "that he'd spend a million to star her if she would go upon the stage, and there's no end to the Surryline money, you know."

Mrs. Cortelyou's fan closed with a snap.

"There will never again be theatricals for the Haven of Mercy for Incurable Children. Remember that, Charlotte. It was your suggestion, the theatrical part of it; or at any rate, you listened to those mad girls first about



it. But I'll forgive all that if you'll bear in mind, while I'm away, that Beverly Surryhne must be quietly, very quietly, dropped. A man whose wife is dying of cancer has no right to be seen so much in society, anyway."

"She has been dying for five years, Mrs. Cortelyou." Mrs. Tettlow was human. The implication that blame was to be laid upon her shoulders was more than she could bear.

"And she may be five years longer dying, poor Agatha, or drop out in a day."

Mrs. Tettlow fanned herself a moment in silence.

"Half the girls I know would jump at the chance of becoming the second Mrs. Beverly Surryhne," she hazarded at length.

Mrs. Cortelyou unfurled her fan again with a contemptuous click.

"A libertine and a shameless fellow, whose methods are unpardonably sensational. Besides," she added, beckoning to Flora Chrétien, who was passing, her face eagerly uplifted to the young man upon whose arm her hand rested, "the girl who marries him marries out of her set. By next spring, Charlotte, no one we know will know Beverly Surryhne. For Agatha's sake we have borne a good deal, but now— My dear," she put her arm through Miss Chrétien's, "leave Mr. Shaw to talk to Mrs. Tettlow for a moment. I've a favor to ask of you."

"Oh, Missis, what a compliment!" With a glance, Flora dismissed the young man, and turned toward her great-aunt with a fulness of attention and sympathy that warmed Mrs. Cortelyou's heart.

"Among all my débutantes, Flora," she said softly, "there never has been one that could flatter me as you do, my girl."

"The flattery's for me, Missis," said the girl, as they moved away. "Imagine being able to do a favor for Mrs. Cortelyou! Oh, ask me anything to-night, Aunt Eunice, I'd love to—"

Her voice was lost in the opening bars of the next waltz, and Mrs. Tettlow was left looking at the young man

who stood before her. He seemed outwardly much like the men she knew. Yet she was acutely conscious of a difference. It lay, she decided, in a lack of grace in his manner of wearing his clothes, but also—and perhaps it was more easily detected here—in what seemed to the lady an inappropriate purposefulness of eyes and lips; a suggestion that the one expected to receive and the other to give more significant things than the current easy coin of conversation. It made Mrs. Tettlow a bit uneasy, this silent difference. In her charitable undertakings she was not altogether unused to meeting people of a different caste, yet these meetings had always taken place upon neutral ground, in different surroundings. But to receive this man as a social equal presented difficulties to a lady who had, so to speak, inherited part of her social success and married the other part.

Vainly she sought for a topic upon which she might meet this person, who meanwhile looked after Flora Chrétien and seemed quite content not to converse. Within her limits, Mrs. Tettlow was an expert conversationalist; she knew intimately every ramification of a social connection within four generations. She was a voluble and animated Blue Book, but how could this strange young man benefit by her acquirements? In despair she seized upon the one acquaintance they had in common.

"She is the most winking girl I know. You probably do not know Mrs. Cortelyou well. Mr.—Mr.—"

"Shaw," supplied the young man.

"Pardon me, Mr. Shaw. If you knew Mrs. Cortelyou, I was saying, you would realize how unusual it is for her to unbend like this to a girl. I'm speaking of Miss Chrétien, of course," she added, as he stood listening.

"Yes, I knew it was Miss Chrétien. She has a quality, a certain talent for being lovable that is irresistible. I—never quite imagined there was any real girl like that."

Mrs. Tettlow put up her lorgnette.

She looked quite tall and very cold as she scrutinized this daring person who presumed to discuss a connection of Mrs. Cortelyou in so unceremonious a way and with so ardent a voice.

"Mrs. Cortelyou tells me—that is, I understand that you have been an actor," she said promptly, with the intention of moving the conversation to the ground upon which she could most innocuously meet the stranger. "It must be a very—interesting occupation."

"It's not an occupation; it's a possessing, like every art. More so, even, than most, though it's only half-art, after all. It's a limiting profession, of course; it has to be. Actors are specialists, you see; they've got to be intensely individual. But what they lack in breadth they make up in enthusiasm. If such men as these fellows," he indicated, with a quick out-thrusting of his rather heavy chin and a smile in his clear, dark eyes, the young men who were dancing and the older ones who stood about chatting, "if your sort of man, Mrs. Tettlow, could borrow from some actors and actresses I know, just a bit, the smallest essence of the honest enthusiasm with which we make and make over the world, build plays and theaters and pull 'em down, create successes and live up to them—and all over a glass of beer or a cup of coffee—if their dilute commonplaceness could be tinged with just a bit of our dreamer's leaven—why, then, they could do the things their grandfathers did, instead of telling about and living on them. And, incidentally, they'd be fit to mate with such a girl as Flora Chrétien."

Mrs. Tettlow gasped. Her intuitive sense that this creature could not be made to accept and pass the flat but safe little nickel of convention, that his perception of conversational values was all awry, had been justified. She tried again.

"You are no longer, then, an actor, Mr.—Shawhan?"

"I never was an actor, Mrs. Twemlow." (There was a glint in Shaw's eye and a revengeful accent to his mis-

use of her name. He had grown rather proud of the name Oliver Shaw since it had been signed to a successful play. But Mrs. Tettlow was quite oblivious both of her offense and his revenge.) "No, I can't say that I was ever an actor. I used to try to act, but I failed. The peculiar quality of temperament, the concentration on little things, and the impressionistic view of big ones, the patient re-creating of other people's thought, the scattering of one's ego through many characters, the passionate joy in that bastard sort of success—being some one else; any one but oneself—I haven't got it. At least, I haven't got it in the completeness which makes a good actor, and it isn't worth while being a mediocre one; that is the most contemptible of all mediocrities that drag along the tattered fringe of the skirts of art—you know." Shaw had begun by being too conscious of his listener; he ended by completely forgetting her.

"Yes."

Mrs. Tettlow glanced helplessly over her fan toward Mrs. Cortelyou and Flora Chrétien. But their eyes were turned toward the open doorway and the small veranda beyond where Beverly Surryhne's white head and handsome, youthful, pale face bent over a girl whose elaborately ruffled gown proclaimed Beatrix Tettlow.

"And now," Mrs. Tettlow persevered politely, "you are staging amateur performances for people, Mr. Bradshaw?"

A shout of laughter went up from Shaw. It turned Flora Chrétien's eyes curiously toward him for a moment. Mrs. Tettlow had the shuddering satisfaction of saying to herself that she could have prophesied this man would laugh like that.

"I beg your pardon!" Shaw was still laughing enjoyingly. "I beg your pardon, Mrs. Tittcomb." (This time the lady seemed aware of something unusual in his address, but she evidently dismissed the idea that any one could miscall the Tettlow name.) "I'm really sorry, but what sort of profession would that be, and how could a full-grown man like me live on it?"

"I'm sure," Mrs. Tettlow flushed disapprovingly, "I haven't the least idea."

"Neither have I. I am a starving playwright, at your service, who has written one comedy that was a hit, but who didn't profit by it as he ought to have done because he was a—imbecile enough to sell it outright to a shark named Tausig. But you needn't waste your pity on the man who has written a successful play, even if he has sacrificed it. For he has still got the head that made that play, and in addition he has had some experience which he needed. I'm stage-manager at the Betsy Ross for Mr. Braun, who sent for me when Charlie Weston got—was overcome by the heat and couldn't keep his engagement with Mrs. Cortelyou. After I came once to help the young ladies stage poor Rostand, I—got interested. That's all."

"Thank you."

Mrs. Tettlow breathed a deep sigh of relief, for Mrs. Cortelyou and Miss Chrétien had evidently finished their talk and were coming toward them.

"And you'll love me for it, Missis, will you?" Flora's voice came clearly to them now that the dance was done and the music still. "More than you loved me yesterday or the day before or even the day of my coming-out party—is it a compact?"

"Yes—yes," Mrs. Cortelyou smiled upon the girl with a fondness that softened her serene old face. "Provided that you don't lose your head yourself, and keep well in mind the purpose of it all. Flora, I would not trust any other girl than you with such a—commission."

"Oh, my head's on tight." With a pretty gesture, Miss Chrétien put her hands up to her throat. From the round baby neck of her thin gown her brown head bloomed out like a conscious flower. "Count on it, then, Missis, dear Missis. And—good night." She caught the old lady's hand and for a moment leaned close to her. "I won't see you to say good night again, and you won't be awake in the morning when I go over to Aunt Isabella's. Good night, dear Missis."

She turned quickly, put her hand on Shaw's arm, and turned with him to cross the ballroom.

"You see," she said softly, "it's good—by I'm saying to her. I don't dare tell her. We were to have sailed—she, Miss Tettlow, and myself—day after to-morrow. She'll sail without me and without a word to me, when she finds out about my going on the stage, but I'm in hopes she'll forgive me—after a bit. Oh, Mr. Shaw, just now, just this very minute, all this," she stood still a second and put out a little hand longingly, "all this looks very lovely to me, very satisfying, very much my own. I love to dance. I love all this—lights and fun and flowers and pretty gowns, and all my people, mine ain folk, pretending to be gay and happy, if they're not. Oh, and I hope they are and always will be! But just this minute, this quick-passing second, I'm not a mite ambitious. I'm only any silly girl that's having a good time with her life and wouldn't change it for all the world. And—and I'd very much like to cry!"

He looked down upon her puzzled, charmed, curious. But he had nothing to say. The bond between them of her ambition and his furthering of it, he felt just then, was a very slight, impersonal one. It was almost a shyness that seized him and prevented his influencing her at this moment by even a comment.

"But I haven't the time." Suddenly her voice had become quite gay with an undercurrent, he thought, that had something in it of that reckless delight in adventure, in playing a part that had turned her own head, as well as those of her friends and critics, when she danced through *Percinet's* rôle. "I have other, I have other fish to fry," she sang under her breath. "Ordered fish they are—such a funny order from such a source! But they shall be fried brown and duly delivered, Missis," she laughed over her shoulder toward Mrs. Cortelyou, who, being out of hearing, could only wave her fan warningly. "Remember it 'when I am gone—I am gone.'"

He breathed more freely. "I thought for a moment I—we'd lost you, Miss Chrétien," he said.

She shook her head. "There never was the slightest danger. I only wanted to cry a bit—a dissipation as necessary and quieting to women as smoking or swearing is to men. But I believe, after all, this—fish order will do quite as well. Let's hurry, please. I don't want Trotter Tettlow to see me. He's my next partner and—and—and——"

She purposely left her sentence incomplete, and with the lightest touch she led him toward the veranda. They had crossed the ballroom, and the sound of Beatrix Tettlow's light, high voice, gay with excitement, came clearly to them.

"Tell me," demanded Shaw, a sudden perception of Miss Chrétien's preoccupation coming to him; "what part do I play in this fish order?"

"You—you're," she hesitated a moment, as though trying to give him her attention, "you're the boy that delivers the fish, I think, Mr. Shaw." She laughed, and at the sound Shaw saw the white-haired man on the veranda turn a particularly graceful body and stare in their direction. "I think you are," she added, in a lower key and looking up at him doubtfully. "I'm not sure yet—we'll see."

"It's a most dignified rôle you've chosen for me," he said stiffly.

That awakened look on Surryhne's face was sudden enlightenment. Had she deliberately sought the veranda and the flashing glance of admiration in the man's expressive dark eyes?

"If it isn't *Percinet*!" Surryhne said. His voice was peculiarly soft and gentle. Even in his enthusiastic moments—and for beautiful gir's Mr. Surryhne shared Mrs. Cortelyou's enthusiasm—its significance lay beneath its tone, like the yellow-pink sparkle of coals under ashes. "Ah, *Monsieur*——" he began.

"*Monsieur*?" Trix Tettlow repeated.

She had held out a hand to her friend, but Flora evidently did not see it, for, followed by Shaw chafing at Surryhne's manner and a something

less tangible in Miss Chrétien's own, she had passed her with a nod and sat perched now upon the low railing overlooking the old Cortelyou garden.

"Of course, *Monsieur*," Surryhne explained, with a low laugh. "I can't very well address the young fellow as *Percinet*, Miss Tettlow. We're not quite on such terms—yet. But Miss Chrétien's really a boy, you know. We all know since last Thursday," he continued, turning to Shaw for corroboration.

"Yes, wasn't she great?" interpolated Miss Tettlow loyally.

"A fairy sort of boy," Surryhne went on, ignoring Shaw's lack of responsiveness. "Prince Charming—Prince *Percinet*—in short, and for short, *Monsieur*."

He bowed with a fantastic, exaggerated reverence toward Flora. (And Surryhne could bow; his methods, as Mrs. Cortelyou had remarked, were sensationally up to date, at times even in advance of his age and environment, but his manner and his picturesque bodily grace were of an older country and another period.) And she returned his glance with a saucy, provoking air that sat charmingly upon her.

"You see," Surryhne turned to Shaw as though instinctively aware of, though indifferent to, criticism, "Miss Chrétien does not object."

"Why should I?" The challenge in Surryhne's voice had awakened a tone in the girl's that neither Miss Tettlow nor Shaw had heard before. "Why, it's a title, isn't it, second only to the king's, and Mr. Surryhne pronounces it as no other man of my acquaintance does—no man not a Frenchman. And a Frenchman, of course, isn't a man—only a manner."

Surryhne turned toward her. The movement was as unconscious, as inevitable as the change of position in a flower that follows the sun—the brighter of two suns, as it were.

"When you're as gracious as that," he said, in a low voice, speaking directly to her to exclude the others, "you make me afraid of you. There's a thorn behind such unaccustomed sweet-

ness. What are you going to do with me?"

Miss Chrétien laughed. She looked past him to where Miss Tettlow sat talking with Shaw. Was it pique, Miss Chrétien wondered, with a pang.

"Has he been asking you such questions, Trix?" she demanded. "Fancy any girl 'doing' with Mr. Surryhne!"

But Miss Tettlow did not hear.

"We're half-angry with you," she was saying in an undertone to Shaw, "for helping her to leave us—she has told us, you know."

"Oh, no, you're not angry—you can't be, if you're really her friend," said Shaw earnestly. "She has such talent, more than she realizes. Suspend your judgment till she has had her opportunity and some experience. Perhaps you'll be grateful to me some day, Miss Tettlow, perhaps she will when——"

"We're evidently de trop, Mr. Surryhne," Miss Chrétien's words were quite distinct this time, and broke in upon Shaw's low-voiced rejoinder.

"Nonsense, Flo," Trix Tettlow laughed back at her.

But Flora was merrily bent upon being offended.

"Don't tell me, Trix Tettlow," she cried, slipping to her feet. "I'm surely as pervious to a gentle hint as any girl. Mr. Surryhne, won't you take me down into the garden? If you will, I'll show you a——"

"A wall?" cried Surryhne, offering his arm, his eyes eager and alight. "Oh, Monsieur, can there be a delicious Rostand wall in this garden, too?"

"It's—a bit damp down there," hesitated Miss Chrétien.

In a moment Surryhne had whipped off his coat, and stood in the moonlight, a long, slim figure of graceful strength, holding it toward her.

"Oh, but——" protested Flora.

"Let me go for a shawl for you, Miss Chrétien. May I bring one for you, too, Miss Tettlow?" Shaw's words sounded harsh after the almost femininely soft smoothness of Surryhne's voice.

"No, thank you, Mr. Shaw." Miss

Tettlow was already turning back into the ballroom. "I must get back to mother—— No, Mr. Surryhne," she quickly negatived the motion he made, "you're going to see a wall, you know. Mr. Shaw will take me back, won't you? We're to go home early; we sail day after to-morrow, Mrs. Cortelyou and I, and there's shopping and fitting and—good night, Flo."

"Good night, Trixy. Don't forget we lunch together to-morrow, sure," Flora called after her.

And as though Shaw's words were the one thing needed to determine her perversity, she permitted Surryhne to lay his coat about her shoulders. But she flew toward Beatrix and hugged her with a guilty tenderness that brought tears to her own eyes, before she put her hand on Surryhne's arm and they started down the steps toward the garden.

"Oh, blue eyes," he was quoting sentimentally, "'smile from out those gathering mists, Blue sapphire eyes that melt to amethyst.'"

A sudden silence had fallen upon talkative Trix Tettlow. And Shaw himself did not speak. He was mentally going over the little scene, as he brought Miss Tettlow back to her step-mother—and that dame gave him the merest nod of recognition—to try to discover just how it had come about that he had indeed played the part of the boy who delivers the fish.

### III.

The dressing-room that was assigned to the ingénue of Beryl Blackburn's company, on its return to Philadelphia, and the Betsy Ross Theater, some ten months later, was named "The Nance Olden," in honor of a famous comedienne who had played there the night the new little theater was opened. It was unusually light and large, this particular dressing-room, and it was the cause of a tremendous scene one afternoon between the star of the company and Mr. Isadore Braun, its manager. Not that Miss Blackburn's own room was not quite comfortable, but

that a shrewd idea of the value of straws in showing which way the wind is about to blow, was part of the actress' stock in trade.

"That Chrétien girl has been pampered and petted ever since she condescended to put her dainty foot in the theater," Miss Blackburn, in a rage, at last openly charged her manager. "It's all rot about her aristocratic connections being so good a card. They're still furious at her, and you know it. Besides, you've played 'em for all it's worth, Izzy. And now that she's no longer Old Family, but just plain second support—even if she is so stuck up—what's the sense of putting her over the heads of Grace Weston and Marie Avon? They won't stand for it. They'll get up and dust if you pile it on thick as this. Then, too, it ain't good for the girl's reputation—you'll get all sorts of stories about you and her going. She's a young thing and— Shut up, Izzy!" Miss Blackburn stamped pettishly. "I—I feel like beating you when you laugh like that!"

And Miss Blackburn stormed out of the office.

Mr. Braun lifted one shoulder, grimaced sardonically, and twirled his pointed beard. He looked like a small, well-fed, blond Mephistopheles, as he sat for a moment looking complacently after the star of his company. Then he turned philosophically, took a telephone off the hook, and called up a florist.

When Flora Chrétien arrived at that same dressing-room an hour later, it was gay with dogwood blossoms and furnished with the choicest of the Betsy Ross' stage-properties, and her own little table shone with burnished brass and delicate china under the glow of shaded lamps. A heavy red carpet had been laid along the narrow corridor leading to the stage entrance, and Ginger, the call-boy, in livery, stood at attention before her door.

"Is that you, Ginger?" she cried gaily, stopping in front of the small man and curtsying deeply. "I shouldn't have known you."

Ginger blushed. "Say, Miss Kre-

ton," he asked feelingly, "do I look a awful guy?"

"You look like an awful swell, Ginger-snap!" Miss Chrétien touched the boy lightly and admiringly on the shoulder.

"Sure?"

"Sure. Why, it's a bully little part you're playing this afternoon! The gayest little *gamin* (that's French for 'tough') behind the scenes is going to do the heavy small swell from four to six, to oblige Flora Chrétien and make her little home-coming tea a howling success."

The boy's old little face brightened, and insensibly his back straightened.

"I say, Miss Kreton, will the old guy herself come?"

"Ginger!" There was dismay in Flora Chrétien's eyes, but her voice shook with an approaching laugh. "You actually mean Mrs. Cortelyou, you imp!"

The boy nodded.

"She—she's not—— Yes, she is what you'd call an old guy; only don't call her that, will you, Ginger-snap?" The girl put an arm about his neck and squeezed it softly. "She's been mighty good to me, that dear little old lady, whom I haven't dared to invite. And so I'm making this a girls' tea, you see, nothing but girls."

"All swells?" asked the boy.

She nodded humorously, and turned to enter the room.

"Miss Kreton——" began the boy, but stopped with an embarrassed laugh.

She was changing the disposition of the furniture and rearranging some draperies. But she stopped and looked questioningly at him.

"I say, if they's only going to be girls, what makes you look—even prettier'n you do when you go on?"

She flew to him. "Do I, Ginger—do I, sure? I want to to-day. No taffy, now—honest, do I?"

Her eagerness made him back shyly from her.

"Why," he stammered, "you look like the Dauphiness of France in 'A Tiger of the Terror,' that they're playing down on Arch Street. You ought



t' go to see that show, Miss Kreton, you'd learn a heap. I been there," he went on, in his enthusiasm, forgetting his point—for Ginger, though officially loyal to his own playhouse, spent every night off that was given him in glutting his starved soul with melodrama. "They's nuthin' la-de-dah about the 'Tiger of the Terror,' I tell you, miss. Nuthin' talky, but suthin' doin' all the time. An' straight stuff, the real business, you know; mobs and the Tiger slashin' his knife over the Dauphiness' head when he's full, and—oh, thank you, Miss Kreton, I did want to take a girl I know to-morrow af."

He pocketed the tip she had given, and strolled casually away toward the stage entrance that he might discover its value unobserved.

Miss Chrétien went back into her room. She covered some of the gaudy grandeur of the setting with draperies, rejected altogether a piece or two which were the apple of Isadore Braun's eye, opened a window, loosened the dogwood on its great stalks, and sat down dreamily before her dressing-mirror.

She sat so long and so still, that when she raised her eyes the youthful, pretty face and figure opposite her in the mirror had all the effect of the new and unexpected, and she smiled, with only a touch of self-consciousness, half-patronizingly upon this vision of herself.

"You're happy, Flora Chrétien," she was saying to herself, as she leaned forward, her elbows on the table, her chin in her palms; "that's what's the matter with you. You've done it, haven't you? Served your apprenticeship these hard months barnstorming around the country. And now you know things, don't you? Or you think you do, you conceited thing! Well, you know enough, anyway, to have Oliver Shaw's new play tried on you." She touched a typewritten heap of manuscript that lay on the table before her lovingly, as though it could feel the hope and pride she felt. "Oh—and if you don't 'make good,' as Braun says, if you dare to don't, Flora——"

A little clock in a leather-case to her right struck a single bell.

Flora Chrétien looked at it unbelievably, almost reproachfully. It had never failed her since the Christmas Mrs. Cortelyou sent it to her three years ago.

"It isn't half-past four yet, you stupid," she remonstrated inwardly with the clock. "And it's silly of you to go all right when you're dragged up hill and down dale all over the country, and then get fast the minute you're home again and safe on the shelf. Things don't go fast in Philadelphia, remember. Do you fancy you're already on Broadway where this new play of Shaw's is going to take us, you and me? Do you?" She gave the clock a little, impatient shake in uttering the last two words, and her voice was querulous, though the words she had thought in were gay and confident.

She set the clock down and hurried to the door. At the end of the corridor, the liveried Ginger stood patiently silhouetted in the open doorway, whistling the "Marseillaise" with steady persistence and keeping time with his heels.

Miss Chrétien's color was higher when she faced herself in the mirror again, and there was a set to her slender neck and small head that was a challenge. But only the same questioning, defying, indignant eyes met hers, and then wandered from her face to the reflected room. The flowers bloomed on, the lights shone softly, the water bubbled in the Five o'Clock that had been a gift from Kate Cortelyou, and the empty chairs stood grouped and waiting.

"Like a stiff stage-setting playing to a ghastly, empty house!"

The phrase that fitted the situation came suddenly to her mind. It drove the color from her cheeks, this phrase that seemed almost to create the thing it put into words. Flora Chrétien lived long enough to accept the situation and to make a resolution in the moment it took her to cross to the table where the fat little kettle bubbled, and to put

the cap over the alcohol flame. It had caught her nerves, this tiny, waiting blue flame; it typified in one small, active spot the story the whole room seemed crying out to her now. She drew a breath of relief as the steam from the spout gradually became less; and when she turned at length to the door, the clock on the shelf struck five.

"The girls are most fashionably late," she said to herself, her lip curling savagely.

And even as she said it she heard a swishing of silk in the corridor without. In her relief she caught at the fragile little tea-table to steady herself, and sent one of the cups spinning into fragments on the floor. And she was stooping to pick them up, and to hide the queer, prideless trembling of her limbs, when Ginger's voice made itself heard.

"Miss Beat-trix Cortelye Tettlow!" he announced, with all the stately gravity and the elocutionary effect he had noted down on Arch Street, where the last Louis nightly held his levee.

"Oh—Beat-trix!" Miss Chrétien laughed hysterically, holding out her arms.

And a light whirlwind of lace and silk and blond girlishness leaped into them.

For a moment Ginger looked on with interest. There was scientific inquiry in his steady eye. But so far as he could see, one who bore the awful name of Cortelyou demeaned herself precisely as the manicure-girl he intended to take to "A Tiger of the Terror" had behaved when a fellow shop-girl appeared suddenly after the two weeks' vacation, which the philanthropic owner of a department-store across the way bestowed annually upon his employees in the dead heat of summer.

Then Ginger withdrew.

"I'm awfully late, Flo." Miss Tettlow settled her hat, shook out her ruffles, dropped her tiny sleeve-dog, and fell into a chair all at once. "But we landed, you know, only yesterday. I couldn't get that tiresome French maid I've brought back with me to

hurry, and I was just dying to see you. You—you look different, Flo."

"You don't, Trix." Evidently Miss Chrétien could not trust her voice altogether, for she spoke slowly. "You're the same blessed sublimation of girl that I've been trying to imitate all these past months."

"Me? Not me!"

Miss Chrétien nodded. "Yes, but it was an awfully bad imitation. I can see that now. But—it went, Trix," she added, almost shyly.

"Flo!" Beatrix squealed with delight. "Fancy you're getting any good out of doing me!"

Whereupon it became necessary that Miss Tettlow and Miss Chrétien should embrace rapturously.

"And are you going to go on doing me? Oh, I must see it, I simply——"

"No, I've got a harder thing to do next, Trix."

"Juliet!" It was a gasp of content from Trix.

"Never!" Miss Chrétien laughed outright. "It's Flora Chrétien that I've got on my hands now; to play her, to put her into this new play of Shaw's, and——"

"Oh—Oliver Shaw!" Miss Tettlow's exclamation was a revelation of resurrected sentiment, but it ended in a naive little giggle. "I'd forgotten all about him. But I was—hit, you know, Flo—yes, really, I had a hard case. How could a girl help it—he simply didn't see me, or know that I was alive. He'd just grab me as though I was a wax figure, and say to you: 'This way, Miss Chrétien. With your arm about her, like this—permit me, Miss Tettlow—and your whole body bent over her as though every fiber in you were caressing her, say to your sweetheart:

"*Sylvette*, we're dreaming. *Sylvette*, do not seem  
To breathe too deeply, lest we break our dream."

Miss Tettlow's shallow, birdlike voice fell suddenly from its sentimental pitch.

"It's positively the only line I re-

member in the whole thing, Flo. My own part has faded clear out of my memory, but those two lines, and Shaw with his eyes on you saying 'em—It's a wonder I didn't hate you, Flora Chrétien!" she concluded, with a hug.

Miss Chrétien set about rekindling the alcohol flame under her tea-kettle. She laughed as she looked over its top down into Trix Tettlow's bright eyes.

"How much nonsense you can talk, Trix."

"Yes. But I mean some of it." She nodded sagely.

"Not about hating me?"

"I really did once for a minute—just for a second, Flo."

"Not really?"

"Oh, not on account of Oliver Shaw. But because the mere sight of you could make a man like Mr. Surryhne behave like a simpleton. It wasn't your fault, but—"

A conscience-stricken expression on Flora's face changed to one of concern.

"But, Trix," she cried, taking the girl's hands and pressing them warmly, "who cares how such a man as that behaves?"

"I—I do."

"I won't believe you."

"Oh, yes, I do. I haven't seen him for nearly a year, you know," she added naively; "and of course I don't know how it'd seem now. But a year ago if he'd—"

"Do you know the sort of man he is?" Flora asked in amazement.

"Why, of course, I know people talk about him," said the girl airily.

"You can't. You don't know what you're talking about."

"Oh, don't put on your big sister airs! I'm only four years younger than you. 'She loved me for the dangers I had passed'—isn't that what *Othello* says? Well, for dangers, read love-affairs. Oh, now come, Flora, don't put on such a horrified air. I'm not going to run off with him—probably because he wouldn't think it worth while to run off with me. And Mrs. Surryhne is still alive, poor thing!

But, really, there isn't a man like him. He's the kind that's fascinating—fascinating. You feel that he's seen it all and knows it all, and is so deliciously wicked and so polite—the mere sight of him excites you and makes you feel you're playing with fire. And, after all, Flo, if you're going to battle, don't you want to bring down the biggest game? If I'd lived in the days when women were savages and didn't have to pretend, I'd have set my cap for the biggest fighter of them all. He—Surryhne—is the warrior (in a way he is) that's made the killings. You want the man that no woman can make fall in love with her, or the one that all women are afraid of—and that's Beverly Surryhne."

"Oh, you mad little Beatrix!"

"But I'm not so mad as to tell anybody but you. And you must confide in me. Tell me, does Oliver Shaw keep his eyes on you in that same way?"

"Tell me," mocked Miss Chrétien, "did you bag a count abroad?"

"Nary a bag—that was worth while. There was a delightful Frenchman who asked me to come out with him in his automobile one day at the Crédit Lyonnais station, while grandmama was getting some money on her letter of credit. He told me I was very pretty, and when grandmama turned around and caught us, I told her in English that he had thought I was alone, and had merely asked if he could be of assistance to me."

"Yes?" Miss Chrétien asked absently. She hadn't heard a word since the mention of Mrs. Cortelou.

"Yes, and the flirtatious wretch understood English! Why don't you laugh, Flo?"

Miss Chrétien turned from the tea-table and took her friend's hand in hers. "Has she ever—what does she say about me?" she asked slowly.

"Not a word, Flo, dear," Beatrix faltered.

"She never even speaks of me?"

Miss Tettlow shook her head.

"Now, don't get that haughty Cortelou air yourself," she hurried on. "She'll change her mind some day."

"Aunt Eunice?" Flora's voice was hard and incredulous. "Aunt Eunice change her mind—did you ever know that to happen, Trix?"

"Well," Trix stammered, "not after she had once really made it up. But perhaps she hasn't quite decided what to do about you. When Kate—but tell me about yourself, Flo."

"What about Kate?"

"Kate? Did I mention Kate?" Beatrix was obviously fighting for time. "I forget what I was going to say. I'll remember later. Now about you. Tell me——"

But Flora was pitiless. "You were going to say something about Kate and Aunt Eunice; what was it?"

"Oh, that she hardly expected to—be able to—to come—why, upon my word—if it doesn't sound like Kate herself! It's her step."

She looked to the door where Miss Cortelyou, tall and imperious, stood for a moment as though transfixed with astonishment at sight of Beatrix.

"Why, Trix—Trix Tettlow!" she exclaimed.

"Miss Cortelye," announced Ginger, belated but impressive.

But Miss "Cortelye" put the boy aside bodily and came striding in. She caught Flora to her with a gesture that was almost fiercely protecting.

"Oh, my dear," she cried; "my dear, dear girl!"

Something that had been growing hard and rebellious in Flora Chrétien broke down under the sincerity and strength of that caress. Her eyes were very soft and tearful when at last Miss Cortelyou held her off to look at her.

"You're well, anyway," she announced brusquely, after a moment's scrutiny.

"Why shouldn't I be?" Flora asked, smiling through her tears. "The sight of you, Mother Kate! Oh, it's a long time, isn't it?"

"But you've changed." Miss Cortelyou ignored the fact that she had spoken. Her keen, dark eyes were searching the younger girl's face. "Not so babyish, eh, Flora Chrétien? Kate

Cortelyou can't bully you so easily as she used to. What've you got to tell me?"

"Volumes—libraries, Kate; whole Sunday editions—all after you've taken your cup of tea and answered one question of mine."

"Well?" Kate, with that dignity of which neither unusual height nor angularity could rob a Cortelyou, sat down and held her tea-cup expectantly.

"It's this, Kate. What is there so very startling in your finding Trix here with me? You must have seen her a dozen times since she got back from her trip. And Trix, what's the meaning of your amazement at Kate's appearance? The only thing that's amazing about it is that she's late. I've been listening for your step, Kate, ever since one minute past four," she added tenderly.

Miss Cortelyou drank down her tea at a gulp. Miss Tettlow weakly demanded sugar and cream, though she loathed both. There was a moment's silence. Then Kate spoke.

"You're a little coward, Trix," she said gently. "And you, Flora, you're positively trying my own tactics on me. How dare you bully me?"

Flora waved it all aside. "Come, Kate, the truth. Why haven't the girls come to me?"

"The theater, perhaps," suggested Trix half-heartedly. "What possessed you, anyway, to have your tea here? I love it—but——"

"Oh, that part of it was Mr. Braun's idea mainly. He wanted the glory of all our set coming here to his little old theater. And I agreed because—After all, girls, the theater is part of me. It's as much in my life—more—than the usual woman's pretty drawing-room is in hers. And the people who come to see me and sit on the other side of the curtain shall not—they shall not draw the line at coming the rest of the way. I belong here now, and I'm not ashamed of it. I'm proud of it, and eager—eager to do something that'll make it proud of me; me, myself—not my friends, nor my relatives, nor my good looks, nor my social

place, but just me, Flora Chrétien, who loves her work more, infinitely more now that she sees what is ahead of her than when she was just blindly stage-mad and struck out, never dreaming of what she was daring to swim to!"

"That settles it!" Miss Cortelyou put down her cup with a sigh. "The reign of Kate Cortelyou is over. Where did you learn to speak like that, to think like that, Flora?" she asked, her gaunt face a-tremble, though her voice was steady. "My dear, I can't do anything more with you, can I? And that means I can't do anything for you."

"Oh, yes, you can. You can be honest with me. Help me there."

Miss Cortelyou got to her feet. The masculinity of which she stood accused among her acquaintances and critics asserted itself in the need for action when she felt strongly. In the severity of her black silk gown, too, her gloves and stout shoes there was a lack of feminine grace; but not Trix Tettlow herself could match the exquisite daintiness of her sheer white shirt-waist, her cuffs, and the lace at her throat.

She crossed the room and came back to where Flora sat and waited before she spoke.

"The truth is just this. The Missis, who has refused all this past year to say a word for or against you, has issued orders through Martha Trotter to all of us whose names were mentioned as being invited to your tea today—"

"The notice? Was there a notice in the paper? Oh!" Miss Chrétien made a grimace of distaste. But her face broke quickly into humorous appreciation. "How—how like Braun!" she half-laughed, in spite of her emotion.

"Mighty like what I fancy him," agreed Miss Cortelyou. "But you're tabooed, Flora—out of it. I told the Missis she'd no right to let your name be hurt—as it will be—by— What does that beastly little boy want now?"

It was Ginger at the door, bearing a forest of American Beauties, behind whose tall, nodding heads his fallow face grinned enjoyingly.

"They're for you, Miss Kreton," he said, with a chuckle.

Flora took the roses. She stood with her back turned to her friends while she arranged their long stems in a vase in the corner. To Trix Tettlow, her wide-open, childishly curious eyes bent upon her, it seemed that Flora was searching for a card. But it never occurred to Flora to look for the name of the sender. She was trying hard to think; but a remorseless chant sang in her head: "Tabooed—out of it! Tabooed—out of it!"

When she turned, though, she had made up her mind to one thing.

"Aren't they lovely?" she asked brightly. "And the jolly part of it is I don't know who they're from. Fancy, for the past eight months I've been getting things—not flowers, but all sorts of pretty things. Look here. I've got them all laid out ready to show you. Of course I never wear them nor use them, but as I can't return them—on account of their being sent anonymously—why, I just keep them as a sort of show. This watch and fob came at Christmas. We were at Pittsburg then. Ugh, the nasty town! I had my first attack of stage-fright there. I'd actually have broken down if it hadn't been for Mr. Shaw helping me from the wings. The bracelet arrived at Cleveland. At Denver the baroque pearl pendant came. At Salt Lake I got the opal—it is a rare one, isn't it? And the rest just pleasantly punctuated the road as we went along. They all arrived in boxes bearing the same Chestnut Street jeweler's stamp, so I know that one person sent them; a person of taste, evidently, who's taken the trouble to follow the movements of the company closely; perhaps a man who knew me here, but with the exception of that unspeakable—"

"Vilets, Miss Kreton," interrupted Ginger explanatorily, appearing again at the door. "And these, I guess, is lilies-of-the-valley."

"And no card on either of them! Now, isn't that devotion for you?" Flora laughed.

She flew about arranging her flowers

with a theatrical sort of gaiety that made Trix Tettlow feel for the first time that her friend was really an actress.

Miss Cortelyou, after looking at the gifts Flora had displayed, sat nursing her knee in a meditative sort of way. She had not spoken for some time, but her sharp eyes watched Flora closely. And she saw a quick change come over the girl's face when a man appeared in an informal way at the door, with Ginger behind him shouting out a pseudo pompous announcement:

"Mr. Oliver Wesson Shaw!"

After which, the boy promptly ducked to avoid the cuffing he correctly anticipated.

"I'm so glad—so glad to see you, Mr. Shaw." Miss Chrétien held out a feverish, small hand that caught at his as though happily relieved by his presence.

"Why, it's awfully good of you," Shaw smiled, a bit surprised by the warmth of her welcome. "All the more so that I hadn't heard of this—function, and wasn't prepared, as you see, and as that imp Ginger saw, to take part in it. I just came in hoping I'd catch you here, and that you'd have time to listen to one act of the play."

"Tisn't a function," said Miss Chrétien, taking his hat from him with a hostesslike air that the young fellow found charming. "It's only my two old friends, Miss Cortelyou and Miss Tettlow, taking tea with me. Kate, Trix, you remember Mr. Shaw?"

"How-do?" Trix Tettlow was gathering up her dog, a rather lengthy and complicated process, but she found time to smile up at Shaw. "Isn't it perfectly fascinating back here behind the scenes?" she gurgled.

Shaw smiled down upon her and the tiny animal, caught by now and gathered up under her plump, befrilled arm.

"But it isn't always like this, Miss Tettlow," he said, looking amusedly about the room.

"But everything seems so deliciously wicked."

"Nonsense, Trix!" Flora spoke

sharply. "There's a million times as much hard work as there is wickedness in the wickedest woman that was ever on the stage, and ever amounted to anything there. As for the rest of us—the rest of us, who have all the work and none of the wickedness—don't you adopt that cruel old prejudice and tar our morals with the same stick. It isn't—fair."

She turned away, regretting having spoken so seriously. But Miss Tettlow wasn't in the mood to take anything seriously just then.

"Oh, of course," she said soothingly to Flora. To Shaw she murmured: "But don't you love it?"

"Oh, I've always been immune, Miss Tettlow. I never had even the first symptom of the really stage-struck."

"What are the symptoms?" asked Miss Cortelyou indifferently.

"Intoxication at the smell of escaping gas and the capacity of seeing magics, where only dirt and paint are built into semblances of things."

"But how, then, did you——" began Miss Tettlow.

"Yes, I was an actor and a stage-manager before I dared call myself a playwright. It was in that capacity that I worked for Mrs. Cortelyou that celebrated night we all did Rostand—up. But I don't know yet that I'm out of the woods of drops and grease-paint. It depends a lot on Miss Chrétien and the new play. If she makes it go, why, then, we'll both get to the top. There is one magic thing behind the scenes, by the way. Our rise, when it comes, is like a rocket's; our fall——"

"But there'll be no fall," interrupted Flora.

"But in other things," said Kate Cortelyou, gathering up her skirts—they were short, but she had an instinctive and unreasoning fear of dirt in this strange place—"it's all rot, isn't it, about actors and Bohemians generally being different from other human beings? I find people confoundedly alike. We're all built on the same last. Now, the people I sell coal to—I'm in coal; here's my card."



Mechanically, in the glance he gave it, Shaw read:

KATE CORTELYOU,

Dealer in Coal.

SOLE AGENT FOR TETLEY ANTHRACITE.

"I used to have 'Established 189—' in the corner," Miss Cortelyou went on, "but I'm getting too old to monkey with dates. As I was saying, the people I sell to aren't a bit more interesting than the people whose teas I go to. I like people who tell the truth, and listen to it, too; and I'll bet you folks behind here know as little of it as we do in front. Flora, here, for example, has been acting a lie for the past ten minutes, at least. Not very well, either. You've got to make a better actress out of her, or give her back quick to her friends, Mr. Shaw. Good afternoon. Flora, good-by, dear. When are you coming to me? I want to know so that I can be alone with you and make you speak and listen to some truth. When, dear? You and I must—"

"Yes. Will Sunday do, Kate? I ought to be able to tell the truth, then. Good-by, and—thank you, Kate, from my heart. Oh, yes, let me say it! And you, too, Trix, you nice little thing!" Miss Chrétien had been accompanying her friends as she talked down the carpeted corridor.

She stood at the street entrance looking wistfully after them as they walked away; and she turned to go back to her room, only to find Ginger pirouetting with delight before her.

"They didn't tumble a little bit, did they?" he chuckled. "Will they tell everybody they know?"

"About what?" she asked, only half-attentive. She was in no mood now for the boy.

"Why, about the flowers! Braun said they'd think half the dudes in town was sending you bouquets. That's why," he went on, in answer to her puzzled look, "he had 'em sent while

the ladies was here. Good ad, hey? Oh, I tell you that fellow Braun's a wise one! I say, Miss Kreton"—as she did not speak, the boy accompanied her along the corridor, looking curiously up into her face—"don't you think it's funny?"

"Yes—yes, very, very funny," she said, with a wry smile. And then as she was about to enter her dressing-room she turned on the threshold. "Ginger-boy," she said, in a low voice, "if either of those two ladies that were here this afternoon ever comes to see me again, never, never let them in. I'm always out, and you never know when I'll be here. Understand?"

But he most plainly did not.

"Not Miss Cortelye!" he exclaimed, in a blank whisper.

"Yes—both of them."

"Oh!" Sudden enlightenment seemed to descend upon the boy. "They've been nasty, the dirty snobs!"

"Hush! No, they've been nice," she corrected. "But they shall not be nice to me under such— Never mind that part of it, Ginger. You understand?"

But Ginger went away, shaking his uncomprehending head.

"You look very tired, Miss Chrétien," said Shaw, as she came back to where he sat looking over the play; "too tired to listen to this." He got to his feet and took his hat. "I don't think I ever saw you so used up. What is it—have you had a crowd here? Is it very sensible to use your strength in this sort of thing?" he demanded indignantly.

"Oh, no, I haven't had a crowd—far from it," she answered. She was fingering her rings listlessly as she sat, her head thrown back against the cushions.

He looked curiously down upon her.

"Anything I can do?" he asked shortly.

She shook her head. "Come Sunday afternoon; we'll read the play then."

"All right. Good-by. I hope you'll rest." He bent to take the hand she held out. "But Sunday afternoon,"

he said, remembering; "that's the time you promised Miss Cortelyou."

"Yes, I know. I wonder"—she caught her breath quickly and withdrew her hand—"I wonder if you'll go right away—now, this minute—without anything—more, please!"

He stood perplexed and concerned for just a moment, then turned and left her. When the door closed behind him, she flew to it and locked it. The tears were raining down her cheeks.

#### IV.

It was Isadore Braun's habit during a rehearsal to sit on the edge of the box-rail; a most uncomfortable and trying position, for Braun was short, and both of his dapperly shod feet could not reach the floor at the same time. So he twisted and wriggled and half-reclined upon the railing, in order to rest one small foot or the other alternately upon the stage.

Shaw, who was watching this first dress-rehearsal, this faulty embodying of his play, could not sit still. In fact, he could not stand, either. He flitted from Braun, hunched at the corner of the box, and, looking like a little dandily attired faun on an ill-fitting pedestal, to Flora Chrétien as she moved, a bit self-distrustful and languid, through the scene. And finally he followed her to the wings, where she stood after a hasty exit, waiting for the cue that should call her again upon the stage.

"You've never quite satisfied me in this next scene, Miss Chrétien; the one to come, with *Wethered*," he began, in a nervous, hurried tone.

"I know it," she answered. "Now why?"

"Because I've seen you do it better."

She looked up questioningly.

"The night of Mrs. Cortelyou's ball, when Surryhne quite unconsciously played *Wethered's* part, and I—delivered the fish. Oh, please don't be angry! I didn't mention it to show you that I was behind the scenes that time, but—well, to be frank, I wrote the scene with *Wethered* thinking all the while

how cleverly you fried your fish that night, and how natural, how inevitable it seemed even to me, a prejudiced and unenjoying observer, that you should get your way. And you know, in the play, *Wethered* is already half-fascinated by *Suzanne's* stepmother; therefore the girl must put forth all her power to attract him. The motive—her devotion to her father and determination to save his honor—is surely enough to justify her, even though she does fall in love with the enemy in the process."

"Weston's a stick," she pouted.

"Granted. And Surryhne was not. But wake him up. Oh, do, Miss Chrétien, do be kind to the playwright here! I'm not to blame. It isn't words—it wasn't words that night. What did you say? A frivolous sentence or two; but your eyes, your manner, your hands, your pose! Make *Suzanne* half as fascinatingly coquettish as was——"

"Flattery is base bribery, Mr. Shaw; and I'm not to be bought that way. And perhaps I ought to be offended. Perhaps even I am." Her color had deepened, but clearly she was not displeased. "Suppose," she added, looking up at him from under the large, soft-brimmed hat *Suzanne* wore in this scene; her finger-tips were resting in her jacket pocket, and she balanced lightly on her heels and toes—"suppose it was not merely a case of frying fish—to order? Suppose that night there was a personal bias that underlay or assisted the acting, and——"

"I don't believe it," he interrupted.

"But you did that night."

"Only for a minute. It isn't in man nature not to suspect that there's something more than excellent acting in a woman's manner toward another man, when the first fellow would give——"

She put out her chin; a saucy pose that resented the implication and interrupted his speech as promptly as though she had spoken.

"Anyway, I don't believe it," he repeated.

"Oh, thank you!" Her hand came out of her pocket, and she held it out to him with a frank, grateful gesture

that was very winning. "I hate him—I hate him!"

She clenched her fist as it lay in his hand; and Shaw, looking down curiously upon her, was surprised by the intensity of her tone.

But her cue came just then, and she ran off, crying: "I'll really do my best, to thank you for not believing."

As he stood looking after her, Shaw saw again the veranda and the old Cortelyou elms dimming the garden in the moonlight; and the two figures descending the stone steps; and he heard Surryhne's caressing voice saying: "Ah, Monsieur——"

His own fist clenched as, in imagination, he followed the two shadowy figures. Though he disclaimed the actor's temperament, Oliver Shaw had the perpetual youth and ardor of emotion which that fountain, the stage, bestows upon those who bathe in its atmosphere. The hate in Flora Chrétien's voice, he would have said, justified the impulse that might have made him fall impulsively, fiercely upon Surryhne, had chance at this moment brought the two together.

But chance is rarely bloodthirsty or revengeful. The stage was clear, save for Miss Chrétien and Hugh Weston, the leading man; and only Braun, curled up awkwardly over on the other side in the corner of the box, was watching them. Shaw crossed back to him; and insensibly the flattery of his own creation, embodied in the girl before him, wooed him from all other thoughts. He listened, he watched eagerly; and presently he felt his heart go thumping in his chest. There it was again, that lovely, light, coquettish figure that had set ablaze the fire in Surryhne's dark eyes that night a year ago; that creature so soft, so wilful; youth and sex incarnate, provoking, alluring, irresistible.

"Braun. Oh, Braun!" he whispered exultingly. "Look at her—see! Didn't I tell you she'd do it?"

But Braun said never a word. His small, twinkling eyes were fixed upon the stage, his plump, white hand lifted to curl his beard had stopped in mid-

air, and upon his thick, parted lips and shiny, rosy cheeks there lay an expression of perfect satisfaction. He looked, not like a faun now, but a dandified, happy little satyr.

"A lady to see you, Mr. Braun." Ginger, looking very important, had come up, and now thrust a card beneath the manager's nose.

Too absorbed even to be resentful at the interruption, Braun waved the boy aside.

"But—I say——" began Ginger.

"Get out o' this!" Shaw cried wrathfully, turning upon him.

Was one to be balked of the sweetest morsel that ever fell ripe into a greedy author's mouth? Could it be expected that he would consent to forego even the smallest portion of so delicious a moment as this?

"But, I say!" protested Ginger, his voice rising as he backed away to a safe distance. "It's Mrs. Cortelye herself; the old party herself!"

A stillness fell upon the empty, echoing theater. At that moment the saucy words Shaw had given *Suzanne* to say hushed on Flora Chrétien's lips, while Weston looked questioningly at her as she stood speechless, the color gone from her cheeks.

Isadore Braun woke from the spell. The satyr was gone, and in its place stood a very modern man of business, his eye alert, his short figure in its rather exaggerated light checks puffed up with complacency.

"Right in my office, Ginger. Show the lady right in, and tell her that Mr. Braun will be there immediately. That's enough for to-day." He clapped his hands, dismissing the company peremptorily. "Come on, Miss Kreton," he added, hurrying toward her and bestowing the prefix of courtesy upon her by mere force of the suggestion of the great Cortelyou name, "let's see what Mrs. Cortelyou's got to say. Phew! Imagine Mrs. Cortelyou coming down to the Betsy Ross to see Isadore Braun! Oh, I wonder if we won't make capital of this!"

But Miss Chrétien shook her head.

"Mrs. Cortelyou didn't ask for me; she doesn't want to see me," she said slowly.

"T—t. T—t!" Mr. Braun clacked with good-natured tolerance of hair-splitting distinctions. "Come on, anyway, and help me talk to her. I'll give you a piece of mine." He held out the card to her in high good-humor.

"You must excuse me, Mr. Braun. I'll do nothing of the sort." And Miss Chrétien very haughtily hurried from the stage.

Her head was high, and the color, coming back to her face, seemed to have been reenforced till it set her cheeks aflame. She flew along the corridor toward her dressing-room, but she forgot till almost the moment when she reached it and saw the open door, that she must pass Braun's office to get there.

A little old lady sat just inside; a very grand little old lady in a handsome carriage-gown and a faultless bonnet. She must have measured at least fifty-eight and a quarter inches to-day, so haughtily erect she was, so uncompromisingly Cortelyou was the poise of her head, as she disapprovingly surveyed the managerial office through her lorgnette.

She dropped it suddenly when Flora Chrétien appeared within her field of vision. She attempted to lift it again, but before she could do so, the girl had stopped suddenly, hurried on again for a short distance, and then, retracing her steps with a rush, was upon her and was clasped in her arms.

"The Missis—my own, darling old Missis!" sobbed Flora.

The fret and the fever seemed suddenly cooled out of the girl's life. With those arms about her, she could be little again, and irresponsible and foolishly, unquestioningly happy—just a girl, not an actress; not an artist, hardly a woman, but a young thing with not a care, not a grief under the sun.

It seemed to Flora Chrétien, in that first moment of conscious savoring of the old, sweet dependence, that nothing the world held had ever been or could be so dear to her. Just to put

aside the ambition and the experience and the eventful year that had passed, and be again the darling of this proud old lady's heart; the protected flower of a civilization which first permitted girl-life to be full of opportunity; which took nothing from its pleasant helplessness, added no weight of responsibility, yet filled life full. Flora Chrétien thought she wanted nothing more.

And Mrs. Cortelyou, feeling the soft straining of young arms about her, the tender yielding of the girl's figure, the throbbing sincerity of her voice, and that old name which no one had spoken for a year; that name she loved for the pretty impertinence that had dared to invent it, as well as for the distinction it conferred—Mrs. Cortelyou found her heart melting within her, and said to herself that she, too, wanted nothing more than this; to have her pretty changeling love her. Let her have her way in everything else.

It was at this moment, though, that Mr. Braun appeared; and it was the most heart-warming and pocket-appealing tableau in the world that gratified the manager's bold blue eyes.

It dissolved immediately, however, greatly to the regret of Mr. Braun, who would have wished to have it photographed for the benefit of malicious gossips and the good of the box-office.

"There—there, my dear!" Mrs. Cortelyou's voice was husky, but she would have perished rather than betray emotion before an inferior—one Isadore Braun, by the way, wholly unconscious of such classification. "Go to your room now, Flora, and wait for me there. I have something to say to this gentleman that isn't—quite—proper for you to hear. Go, dear."

Out in the hall one Isadore Braun slapped his leg in noiseless glee. Something "not—quite—proper" for an actress' ears! He winked generously to share his gratification with Miss Chrétien as she came out; but she had been too much moved to be conscious of his existence, and passed him with unseeing eyes.

Mrs. Cortelyou waited till Braun had

entered, closed the door behind him, and taken a seat opposite her.

"Mr. Braun? . . . I called——" she began very formally.

"De—lighted, Mrs. Cortelyou! Charmed, I assure you." Braun leaned forward in the managerial chair, his ringed fingers clasped in pleasant appreciation. "The Betsy Ross has never had a prouder day. There ain't a theater in the country that can boast such a real swell has been back of its scenes. In England, of course, it's different. But here—it's great business, I tell you. I—am—de-lighted. What'll ye have? The whole house is yours. Hey, Mason!" He opened the door to an inner office, where his secretary and press-agent sat at a typewriter. "The lower left stage box for Mrs. Cortelyou for Monday night—that's Kretton's debou in 'The Strategy of Suzanne,' " he explained to the lady.

Mrs. Cortelyou attempted a protest, but Braun was not to be denied when a generous impulse was upon him.

"There, madam!" he cried, with fine open-handedness, throwing the small envelope on the desk before her. "There!" Braun sat back charmed with himself as well as with her.

"Thank you." Mrs. Cortelyou's face had been growing more and more set. It looked now as though it might petrify with disgust. "It——" she began.

"Not at all! Not at all!" Blandly Braun waved aside all expression of obligation.

"Sir," said Mrs. Cortelyou, in a determined voice, "will you kindly permit me to state the object of my visit?"

"With pleasure, madam," interjected Braun effusively.

Mrs. Cortelyou sat up an infinitesimal degree straighter. "I have learned with pain, sir," she said haughtily, "since my return to America, of certain scandalous stories which have been circulated, and are being circulated, concerning my grandniece, Miss Chretien, and—and a certain, somewhat discredited man about town. Of course, there is not a scintilla of truth in these reports—not a scintilla!"

Mr. Braun was dumb for a moment.

He had heard a new word, and it sounded attractive and impressive.

"I say," repeated Mrs. Cortelyou—and an anxious note crept into the old lady's voice—"there cannot be a grain of truth in all this."

"Of course not—not a scintilla," hazarded Braun boldly. "But it makes fine business."

A sigh of relief shook Mrs. Cortelyou. If Braun had not been so overwhelmed by the compliment of the great lady's presence, he might have pitied her—the relief was evidently so great. But Mr. Braun was miles away from comprehension of his visitor; as far away, indeed, as was Mrs. Cortelyou herself from understanding him. She had hardly heard his last sentence, so strong was the emotion she was trying to repress at this welcome corroboration of her darling's innocence.

The old lady took out a delicate handkerchief and pressed it to her trembling lips. Braun, leaning back in graceful abandon on the back legs of his tilted chair, his elbows on its arms, the tips of his fingers elegantly dove-tailed, gloated over her and each separate indication of caste and luxury his sharp eyes could discern. He seemed the soul of attentive good-nature as he sat there, but his busy little mind had just conceived a business idea that made his blue eyes sparkle and his whole, small, unctuous body tingle with pleasure.

But Mrs. Cortelyou had recovered.

"I want to ask you, sir," she began, in a severe voice that shook Braun out of his pleasant planning, "how it is that, these sensational charges being utterly false, the newspapers dare print them—and concerning a young lady of one of the oldest families in the State; a relative of my own!" she added.

Deprecatingly, Mr. Braun shrugged his shoulders. Or, rather, he shrugged his whole body, the members of that body being too indissolubly welded to permit so detached an expression of mobility.

The severity of Mrs. Cortelyou's gaze did not diminish, but a remembrance of the young arms that had left,

as it were, a wreath of affection about her neck, softened her voice.

"I will own to you, sir, that I came here with intentions which certain circumstances have much modified——"

"Ain't it a swell little theater?" Braun's pride in the Betsy Ross made his whole face glow. "Ain't it fine outside, and spick and span in? Come, I'll show you through myself."

Mr. Braun rose. His theater was the very apple of his eye, and he felt that Mrs. Cortelyou was really a woman of taste and discernment.

But Mrs. Cortelyou only stared.

"Pray keep your seat, sir," She waved him haughtily to his chair, which the bewildered Braun took, forgetting that he and not she was host. "I repeat, certain circumstances have wholly changed my views. As you must know, I am—deeply interested in Miss Chrétien. I am not going to discuss with you certain opinions I hold concerning the stage——"

"Quite right, ma'am. All nonsense! Bosh!" Braun shook his head decidedly, wrinkling up his nose and his short, golden beard with contempt at such outworn prejudice. "Just see how nice and tony the Betsy Ross is!" he added, to confirm her in her good opinion.

Mrs. Cortelyou stiffened.

"As I said, sir," she repeated coldly, "I am not going to discuss"—she lingered emphasizing upon the word—"this subject. I wish from my heart to be able to enter into my dear girl's hopes and plans. In order to do that, I shall make an effort to overcome any obstacle Miss Chrétien's unfortunate choice of a profession might put between us. These very shocking stories are in themselves a reason why her natural protectors should rally to her, seeing that those who have usurped their place seem to have no power to protect her," she added, with significance.

But it was wasted on Braun; he had relapsed into his old posture of elegant idleness; he was thinking.

"In the first place, sir"—Mrs. Cortelyou's voice was peremptory—"Miss Chrétien should have a chaperon."

"Eh?" said Braun, sitting up.

"The constant presence of a lady of undoubted position and unassailable reputation will go far to still the lying tongues which have slandered my grandniece."

"Exactly!" gasped Mr. Braun. So great an idea had come to him that it actually took away his breath for a moment.

"If you could just stay with us now, Mrs. Cortelyou"—the words tumbled out of Braun's mouth in his eagerness—"you can have the left-hand box every night and Saturday matinee. Saturday morning you can drive together with Kreton in the park. I'll furnish the rig; a tony one. Other mornings you could go shopping together in my auto. When you hadn't anything to do, you could just go out the front way with her and come in the side entrance. I'll fix it so's the reporters will see you all right. Phew! With Mrs. Cortelyou for sheep-dog, I tell you——"

"Certain social obligations"—Mrs. Cortelyou spoke slowly, and her deliberate utterance made of every syllable a missile that knocked the heart out of Mr. Braun's hopes—"which I cannot neglect, sir, prevent my taking my post at Miss Chrétien's side. I have selected for that purpose an estimable lady of very old family, also a distant relative of mine, with whom Miss Chrétien used to spend part of her time when she was a schoolgirl. I allude to Mrs. Isabella Cortelyou Tettlow Chrétien."

Mr. Braun heard the name with respect, but he hadn't the heart to speak. "It would be necessary," Mrs. Cortelyou resumed, "for Mrs. Chrétien to be present not only at all performances, but at rehearsals likewise. In short, wherever and whenever a well-bred girl would require a chaperon. While Miss Chrétien remains in town she must, of course, live with Mrs. Chrétien. If the company should leave Philadelphia, will there be any objection to Mrs. Chrétien's accompanying her?" Mrs. Cortelyou's voice dared Mr. Braun to discover the objection.

"Oh, no," said Braun, with good-



natured recognition of the lady's point of view. He was still a bit dejected, but already he saw possibilities. "It ain't in the contract, but the old girl can come along."

Mrs. Cortelyou rose majestically.

"Sir," she thundered, "I must insist that you speak of my relatives in my presence, at least, with respect!"

"Respect?" Isadore Braun's voice betrayed genuine bewilderment. "D'ye think I'd speak of anybody with a Cortelyou in her name without respect? Why, it's the bulliest connection a theater ever had. The advertising we get out of it can't be beat. There was one of the New York Granthams did go on the stage, but she was a rapid one, and her relatives wouldn't stand for her. You remember that story about her and the——"

"It is understood, then"—Mrs. Cortelyou interrupted, quickly moving toward the door—"that Miss Chrétien is to be amply protected, and——"

"Whatever you say, ma'am. Whatever you want. You can have the whole works." Braun threw out his arms and stood before her, in his light checks, his spats, his shining face, and his immaculate white vest nicely rounded by a not ungraceful little body—the soul of generosity.

In fact, he threw his arms so benignantly far apart that one of them struck his press-agent, just emerging from the inner office. Mrs. Cortelyou had swept past him with a nod that merely lowered her eyelids, but she turned at his exclamation.

"Say, Mason," he cried, "you're not off to the newspapers already! Why, I got a corking item for you. Mrs. Cortelyou—yes, sirree, Mrs. Cortelyou herself comes down to the Betsy Ross to call upon her adopted daughter, Miss Flora Kreton, to discuss the subject of a chaperon for the talented young ingénue, who's sure to make a hit as *Suzanne* in 'The Strategy of Suzanne,' Oliver Shaw's great comedy. We'll make it 'adopted daughter' for this occasion, ma'am," he interpolated, with a wink toward the astonished lady. "Make 'em play it up big, eh, Mason?"

That new picture of Kreton that she posed for last week, and one of Mrs. Cortelyou; big head-lines, and, if you can make it, the first page. And say, get pictures of all the swells in town who might be selected to chap——"

"My portrait, sir; my portrait in a newspaper!" Mrs. Cortelyou stood still in the corridor, frozen, with indignation.

"Oh, yes, we can arrange it for you," said Braun easily, curling his beard engagingly. "Don't you worry, we'll fix it all. If we can't dig up one of your own, we'll use any old thing we've got in the office. It'll——"

"Sir, if you dare to put my portrait in a newspaper"—the lady's voice was trembling with anger—"I shall have you horsewhipped, and—and I shall place the matter in my attorney's hands."

And Mrs. Cortelyou stormed out through the corridor, leaving a perplexed and inconsolable Braun looking dejectedly after her.

But the lady's rustling course was stopped as she passed an open door, for Flora Chrétien came out, and, with an arm about Mrs. Cortelyou's waist, drew her inside and turned the key in the door.

"Oh, Flora, Flora!" moaned Mrs. Cortelyou, sinking into a chair. "How can you bear daily contact with that reptile?"

"Mr. Braun? Oh—don't mind him. He's a dear little crocodile, but not worth our wasting words on him after all these months. Let's talk of something else—you, my Missis, and me."

Never lover hovered about his lady more solicitously than Flora Chrétien about this heated, vexed little old woman, who puffed and gasped protestingly, yet put her fat little foot with a sigh of comfort upon the stool the girl slipped under it; who permitted her to lift her veil and put a cushion behind her broad little back, and surround her with an atmosphere of filial tenderness that went straight to the heart deprived for the past year of all this loving care.

"Can't you—give it up, dear?" she asked, when Flora, sitting on the floor

beside her, laid her head upon her lap; and the girl, in a remembering flood of tenderness, felt that dear old hand stroking her hair again.

"I thought I could, Aunt Eunice, when I got that first glimpse of you. If, the moment your eyes met mine out there in Mr. Braun's office, you had said to me in that grand little way of yours, 'Put on your hat, Flora, this minute and come home'—I'd have followed you out of the theater without a word. But"—she looked up now and took Mrs. Cortelyou's soft, still beautiful hand between her own and laid her cheek upon it—"but I'd have come back, dear, or I'd have worn out my heart and your patience aching for it."

Mrs. Cortelyou sighed. But she did not speak; and the short silence that followed seemed to weld the two as closely in sympathy as they had ever been. When the old lady spoke again her voice was very low, but it had a note in it that caused Miss Chrétien to look up suddenly.

"Tell me, Flora, truly now, about Beverly Surryhne. You can tell your old Missis everything—do. What grounds have the nasty papers for coupling your name with his?"

The blood rushed to the girl's face.

"My name with his! Oh, impossible!" she cried.

"I'm glad you haven't seen them. But tell me."

"Surryhne—why, he did follow us along the road for a time, and he did try to see me, but I wouldn't see him. I have thought at times that it was he who—but that's impossible. I haven't spoken to him, Aunt Eunice, for a year; not since the night of your party, when I got Trix away from him. He was—hateful to me that night. It was my fault, perhaps—a little, but I could not know he'd dare—who's there?"

A knock had come at the door behind her. Flora flew to it, and threw it open with a gesture of nervous impatience. But only Ginger stood there, a parcel in his hands, looking curiously up at her flaming cheeks, her trembling lips, and tearful, angry eyes.

It was the unmistakable jeweler's

package which she took from the boy and carried back with her to her aunt's knee.

"What is it?" Mrs. Cortelyou held out her hand.

"Open it. I don't know but I can guess." Flora laid the box in Mrs. Cortelyou's hand. "For it has the same mark that all the others had. Ever since I've been playing, Missis, some adorer has been sending me beautiful things. That's what it is to be a rising young— Aunt Eunice, what is the matter?" She turned swiftly.

Mrs. Cortelyou had risen. While Flora had been gathering up her booty to show to her, the old lady had opened the box. In one hand she held an odd necklace of sapphires, diamonds, and amethysts; from the other a card dropped to the floor.

"I must go home, I must go home, Flora!" Mrs. Cortelyou stammered, clasping her hands piteously. "No—no, don't stop me—don't speak!" She put the girl's hands from her with a gesture whose finality sent a chill to Flora's heart. "I'm—an old woman, and I've borne much to-day. Why couldn't you tell me the truth! Why couldn't you trust me?" She half-sobbed as she hurried away.

With a swift movement, Flora stooped and picked up the card. It was Beverly Surryhne's, and on the back of it was written:

"And did I not the same mad oath repeat?  
I swore to hate you. And—I love you,  
sweet."

"When, Monsieur, when?"

"Aunt Eunice! Aunt Eunice!" Flora hurried out through the corridor that led to the stage entrance. "You don't believe this of me—you don't!" she cried.

But Mrs. Cortelyou, bewildered by the maze of narrow, dark hallways opening at all sort of angles before her, had turned up one of them, crossed another, and hurried down a few steps, till presently she found herself on the darkened stage and face to face with Oliver Shaw; and with that unflinching memory for those whom she had once

received under her own roof, she recognized him.

"Is there any one you're looking for?" Shaw asked, amazed at the old lady's trembling haste. "Can I help—"

"If you'll kindly give me your arm to the entrance where my carriage is, Mr. Shaw. I'm rather lost behind here," she added, making an effort to regain that dignity of carriage and utterance which characterized her.

### V.

"Well, what do you think of this chaperon idea?"

Mr. Braun had asked Miss Chrétien to come to his office to discuss an important matter of business; it was the day that preceded the first performance of "The Strategy of Suzanne," and a few members of the company had met at the theater to change a troublesome detail of a certain scene.

"A chaperon for me—here?" asked Flora.

"Yes. It was Mrs. Cortelyou's scheme. I thought she'd speak about it to you; she was keen on it that day. She'd got the lady all picked out—Mrs. Isabella Cortelyou Tettlow Chrétien. If it hadn't been for my trip over to New York to arrange for a Broadway production if we succeed, I'd have—"

"Aunt Isabella!"

For the first time in a week Flora Chrétien laughed aloud—that untidy, schoolgirl laugh of hers, as Miss Blackburn called it. She looked from the manager's office out through the hallway, at the dark end of which an electric light blazed the way to the dusky stage. Mentally, she was placing the tall, antiquated figure of Mrs. Chrétien—the quintessence of faded gentility, with her long, colorless face; her pale, astonished eyes; her hesitating, gentle manner; her timid, husky voice—here in the atmosphere where the Isadore Brauns and Beryl Blackburns bloomed to perfection.

"You don't take to it—no?" asked Braun, watching her curiously.

"Oh, it's—it's unthinkable!"

"And yet—perhaps there might be money in it."

She looked at him. Money in Aunt Isabella Chrétien; poor old Aunt Isabella, who, living in one room in the most correct apartment-house in town, manufactured soap there, which she most genteely and gently peddled to her relatives and friends!

"In advertising, I mean," Mr. Braun explained. "Of course, it ain't bran' new. It's been done before; overdone, you know. But I guess we could make the papers see that it was the real article this time; no fake—though of course those other little notices might stand in the way. Still, if we could make 'em swallow it, it might be a good scheme to change our method for a time. What do you think?"

"I don't think," answered Miss Chrétien listlessly. Even Braun was not very diverting these days, it occurred to her. "I don't know anything about it. I don't know how you've been advertising. I never look at that sort of thing."

"Oh!" It was an exclamation of surprise; of enlightenment.

"But if you've any idea of using Mrs. Chrétien that way, dismiss it, for it's out of the question. She'll never come here. I doubt if even Mrs. Cortelyou's commands could prevail upon her to put her slim, long, gaiter-shod foot behind the scenes. And even if they could, I wouldn't accept such a sacrifice. And, besides, 'tisn't necessary. In fact, why—why, you know, Mr. Braun, just how ridiculous the thing would be! What's the use of you and me pretending to each other!"

Isadore Braun's face cleared.

"Yes, what's the use?" he echoed comfortably. "You see, we need something new to keep the papers talking, and I'm a bit leery of the old scheme since that talk with Mrs. Cortelyou. It might make trouble after awhile. If I was you, Kreton, I'd think of getting married."

Miss Chrétien stared. She could not quite follow Mr. Braun's logic, but experience taught her that he himself

would unfold its tortuous windings, if one only waited.

"And leave the stage?" she demanded.

"*Gott bewahre!* Leave the stage when you're going to make a hit as *Suzanne!* What rubbish!"

"Oh!" It was an "Oh" with a circumflex accent, and it fell unpleasantly on Braun's ears. "You'd advise me to marry some one connected with the theater, one—even one Mr. Isadore Braun, for instance?"

"Now, Heaven forbid!" Mr. Braun's exclamation was even more fervent than before. "When a man's once a widower, he deserves all he gets if he tempts Providence again. A widower now!" Mr. Braun's self-gratulatory smile was so naively sincere that it appealed to Miss Chrétien's sense of humor; and righteous indignation melted before it like an unseasonable snowflake. "What's finer on earth than being a widower now? Not a widow—not on your life! For there's an uneasy sense in a widow that she ought to be looking out for Number Two; while all the widower's got to look out for is that there shan't be any Number Two. It's natural—for the widow. For what, after all, is a woman—even a woman who has been married—without a man's first name to write between *Mrs.* and, say, *Jones?* That little name, if it's only Tom, or Dick, or Harry; or even Isadore"—with a killing coquettish glance, Mr. Braun flaunted his eligibility in the face of femininity, though in the same breath expounding the vanity of all hope—"that man's name is the significant figure before the cipher. Without it the woman is any number of aughts; that's all she is. She ain't in it—nowhere. Who's Miss Braun or Mrs. Jennie Braun? Nobody. But Mrs. Isadore Braun? Ah, a different matter entirely, entirely. Now, you're talking!"

But Miss Chrétien wasn't. She was listening and looking, all her listlessness and irritation at his presumption forgotten, in the amusement this small, dapper, quite complacent person furnished spontaneously, from sheer ful-

ness of self-satisfaction. But suddenly she remembered that, after all, there was much more than complacency to this very successful gentleman; and that there must have been a motive to turn the conversation into such channels.

"It's cruel of you, Mr. Braun," she said, "to raise one's hopes only to dash them to the ground. Have you positively decided that you'll never be anything else but a widower? Whom am I to——"

"Now, now, Kreton!" Playfully Mr. Braun shook his well-cared-for ringed fingers at her. "No teasing of the animals!"

"But whom am I to marry, then?" She persisted, her curiosity awakened by the subject that never loses interest for a woman.

Braun hitched his chair closer to his desk, and planted his elbows upon it. Over the top of it he looked at her warily.

"I don't just know how you're going to take a thing," he began. "Most times you're reasonable. You've got much more sense than I thought girls like you had."

"Now, thank you!"

"I like everything to be pleasant," he went on, with only a perturbed side glance at her. "Everybody knows I'd do anything for peace sake, and they——"

"They take advantage of it and bully you, brave Mr. Braun, don't they?" laughed Flora, remembering the pathetic picture presented by the helpless Isadore that very morning when Miss Blackburn, Mrs. Weston, and even Marie Avon had almost come to blows in his presence.

"Now, I said to you, don't poke the monkey with your umbrella, Kreton!" Mr. Braun's eye was stern, but his traitorous, peace-loving voice wavered.

"All right. I'll conform to all the rules of the menagerie," Miss Chrétien said, smiling. "Now tell me, what is it all about?"

"There's a man; a swell; rich as blazes," said Mr. Braun, reassured; "and he's gone on you."

"Oh, thank you. How do you know?" Miss Chrétien's voice had lost its gentleness, and there was a slight but most unpleasant accent on the "you."

"Why," said Braun, "he's the man that's been sending you presents ever since you joined us. You don't know who he is, but——"

"Oh, yes, I do. And everything he ever sent me has been returned, of course."

"Oh! Oh, of course." Mr. Braun was evidently taken aback, but he rallied. "He'll feel bad," he said musingly. "He'd have done the same if he'd been free, and been ready to stand for it, he would—Surryhne."

Miss Chrétien did not reply. In fact, she found it difficult to speak of this man at all. His name stuck in her throat, and she had to labor to control a furious anger that possessed her when he was mentioned in her presence.

"See"—Braun hunched himself more and more uncomfortably up into his chair, and his rich voice became huskily confidential—"if you don't want to think of getting married, any more than I do, why, just pretend you do; it'll do as well for the papers. But, look here, I'll give you a tip. She's dying now. I got it straight. Really, she ain't been conscious for a week—Mrs. Surryhne. It won't be—I'll bet you it won't be——"

"Mr. Braun!" Flora leaped from her chair with a cry.

"Oh, of course everybody feels bad for her, poor woman," Braun said soothingly. "But we don't hurry her death by saying it's going to happen. We ain't to blame," he went on, unctuously philosophic. "Cancer is cancer. The poor woman will be better out of her misery. What's to harm if you see him—Surryhne—just once, and——"

"This—that I hate him, hate him!" Miss Chrétien had lost her temper, and was disgustingly aware of it.

"I fail to understand," she said slowly, when she could command her voice—and for the first time Mr. Braun was aware of a resemblance between Mrs. Cortelyou and this grandniece of hers

—"how all this, a personal matter, concerns you."

"Oh!" Braun shrugged himself depreciatingly. "Mr. Surryhne's a perfect gentleman and a splendid fellow. I like Surryhne; he has confidence in me. We have had—dealings before; business dealings," he qualified, after a glance at her face.

She stood dumb with indignation, not sure she comprehended.

"He's done everything a man could do for her; for Mrs. Surryhne. The finest doctors, the best nurses," Braun went on, in a funereally sympathetic tone. "She adores him. And he likes her, too. Never says a harsh word to her; and many men might take it out of a woman that kept 'em tied down. But not Surryhne. He reads to her every day, they tell me—stories; she would never get to see the papers, you know," he added, as she was leaving the room.

The significance of his tone caught her attention. She turned.

"Have you," she asked quickly—"have you read the papers that say anything about me and—him?"

"Have I read 'em? Well, I guess yes."

"Where are they? Have you got them?"

He swung around in his revolving-chair, which some taller man's recent occupancy had left too high for his short legs to reach the floor, and threw open the top of his desk. His almost femininely dimpled, deft white hand lifted a bunch of envelopes here, some letters there, and at last drew out a packet of printed notices and handed them to her.

She took them as though she were handling an unclean thing, and walked away from him to the door. When she should be alone, she thought, she might read them; but her eye happening to fall upon the first—a short, insinuating paragraph on a wide-margined slip of paper, the back of which was blank—mechanically she lifted it to see what followed. At a glance she could tell that the second slip was identical with the first. So was the third. The

fourth, a longer notice, contained allusions a bit more bold and drew conclusions that made the hot blood rush to her cheeks. The fifth was the same as the fourth. And of the sixth, an article with pictures, evidently the most valued of the collection, all the rest of the slips were copies.

"I don't understand." She turned to Braun. She was trembling, and she knew the surging emotion within her must soon find vent; but a sudden suspicion forced its way through her beclouded mind and into words. "It can't be—you didn't—"

"Just didn't I?" Braun's thumbs sought his armholes, and the last vanity, the literary weakness for one's own productions in print, gave the finishing touch to the self-satisfaction in his rosy face. "Ain't they great? First the sly little one in the weeklies—that hardly caught on at all. Then the next one in the Sunday, dramatic notes. By Jove! the next Monday night after that appeared, the house was crowded, and you got your first curtain-call—remember? But that last one, that we got into the dailies. It made us so sure that we accepted Shaw's piece on the spot, and drew up that six years' contract with you. That's what it is to have up-to-date managers, Miss Kreton. That's where you're lucky. We've done for you in ten months what it takes other actresses ten years to do. That's Braun. How do you like him?"

She shivered as she stood looking at him with disgust and fear of losing her last shred of self-control; and gradually her horrified eyes drew his fingers out of his armholes, the expression of self-delight from his face, and himself finally out of his chair.

"You—you're not going to be such a fool as to—" he began uncertainly, walking toward her.

But his voice broke the hysterical clutch that had held her throat tight.

"You—unutterably vile little beast!" she cried, and rushed from the room.

Braun fell back as though he had been struck.

"'Little!'" he exclaimed incredulously.

He sat down and wiped the perspiration that had started to his forehead.

"'Little!'" he gasped.

He got up and rushed furiously to the door, but stopped at the threshold.

"'Little!'" he squealed, his voice breaking with the rage that mastered him.

He heard the stage door shut with a sharp slam. He was a man who had had much experience with women, and he knew the significance of that hurried, unhesitating exit. He fell upon a telephone.

"Shaw—Shaw—yes, yes, is it you, Shaw? Why didn't you get down here before?" he shouted impatiently. "Confound your cold! Come down, for God's sake, this minute! Kreton's gone crazy!"

## VI.

KATE, DEAR, MY DEAR OLD KATE: First, let me say that you were right. I was mad to think of going on the stage. I'm still mad—but I'm going to leave it. And it's because I know—in spite of the fury of disgust I am in now—that I shall regret this decision, that I write to you now (I can't come to you immediately), so that you will come for me and hold me to it.

It wouldn't be possible, would it, for me to change my mind again after this? I couldn't be so contemptible as to bear this new phase of theatrical life after I had told the disgraceful details to you? You'd have no respect for me, would you, Kate? And so I'll tell you about it. I'll write it to you now, so that when we're together we need never refer to it. No one shall know of it but you. It has soiled my life—we'll not let it soil our lips after all this is past and I'm back with you, happy in the old life, with never a wish to leave it again.

Miss Chrétien wiped her eyes when she got to the word "happy." She had been merely angry when she sat down to write this letter, but every word her pen traced seemed to bring her closer to the irrevocable step against which something stronger than her pride battled.

I suppose it will be hard for you to believe (after all, Kate, I'm older than you now; one lives fast on the stage), but my manager, the unspeakable Braun, has actually advertised me as a disreputable woman. He has been marketing my reputation and speculating upon the nasty world's nasty curiosity



about nasty things. "He who steals my good name"—why, he hasn't been content to do that in the ordinary way, with a simple shrug, an innuendo, or a doubt—as men who have seen much of light women do, smutching with the dirty benefit of their doubt of all women, any innocent, unthinking girl who is guilty of the smallest unconventionality, or whom her work places in an unusual position. No, this vile little animal has actually called in the press to help him defame and dishonor me. Oh, Kate, if I could have been a man for just one minute this afternoon, to choke the life out of that infamous creature, I'd have been satisfied to face any consequences the future could have brought! But, being a stupid, silly idiot, who has blindly fallen in with his schemes and been the very, very last one to hear of what he was doing, I could only smart with shame and stand before him, a powerless, weeping ninny, sick with rage and disgust of him—and the world.

Once, a year ago, Kate—I never told you—I felt that same strangling, incensed wonder at baseness. But I thought then that it was the evil in just one man—and a little, oh, just a little my own foolish fault in not knowing the interpretation such a man might put on the simplest, most innocent action. They can't help it, I suppose, that sort of man. They're under the spell of their own minds that they've soiled, and for punishment, like the poor little girl in the fairy-story from whose mouth toads dropped instead of pearls, they are condemned to see even innocence through a veil of vileness, and to hear the Ave Maria itself through ears befouled. Oh, how they must yearn for purity!

But this little wretch of a Braun—

Flora Chrétien dipped her pen savagely in the ink, suspecting herself of philosophic weakening, where she must feel only the simplest emotion that leads to directest results.

—with his shining-faced self-satisfaction, his incapacity to see straight or to think honestly; with his triumphant, childlike, bad blue eyes and offensive, spick-and-span little body! Oh, what punishment is fit for a man like this, sordidly jubilant over his sin!

Of course, it's a punishment for him that I quit him now that we are on the verge of a big success. You've never been an actress, Kate Corleyou, or you'd know how soothing a salve it is to my pride to know this much. But it punishes me, too. Oh, yes, it does. It punishes me as nothing else in the world could—except Aunt Eunice's readiness to believe of me what such a creature as Braun could invent. It's all over between us; she's not the sort of woman to change her opinion readily, and I'm not the kind of girl that begs to be believed clean when I've been insulted by such an implication.

But, never mind, this isn't what I wanted

to say. What I started to write is that leaving the stage will punish me more even than keeping away from you, dear, dear Kate, and keeping you away from me, has done. There have been times these past months when I have called myself over-scrupulous, ungrateful, and unloving—that I could live in the same town and not see you. But I was right. An intimacy would have provoked Aunt Eunice to punish you and Trix. My leaving the stage will so far placate her that she'll pardon our being together now.

For I have never, I am incapable of doubting that you'll have me, that you want me, that you will always, always—

Miss Chrétien's flying pen had gotten slower and slower. It stopped here, and she sat appalled, as though she had called doubt into being by a slip of the pen; and it stood now before her, rigid and full-bodied, impossible to ignore or to charm out of sight.

She was still sitting preoccupied, looking almost incredulously at the last words she had written, when there came a tap at the door.

"Come in," she called absently. "Oh—I can't see any one," she added, as the bell-boy held out a card. "Oh—wait!"

It was Oliver Shaw's name she read there, and a sudden consciousness of what her decision would mean to him came upon her.

His play, his "Suzanne," of which he was so fond! His play? Why, it was hers, too, in a sense, by now. Hadn't they developed it together, as though it were a child of his that had been left at the door of her heart and her appreciation, that she had taken in and warmed and fed and nursed and grown to love and to be proud of? A sense of dismay came to her. To leave the stage? Possibly. But to leave this—to leave it to some other woman who would not know its little weaknesses that she had learned artfully to cover, as a tender foster-mother would shield a child's *gaucheries* with her own personality; some other woman who'd be ignorant of a subtle bit of business set down only in her own mind; who could never appreciate the play's bigness and humanness, its humor and sane, simple pathos; who might even be guilty of sacrificing the spirit that graced it, and

who might make *Suzanne* flirtatious or disingenuous, or anything but the warm-hearted, high-minded young thing she was, flying to the rescue of her simple old father's honor, like some feminine *Sir Galahad*, and risking her womanly pride as a pure, ardent young knight might stake his life on victory!

And this the very night he and she were to have introduced that child of promise to the world!

"Ask Mr. Shaw to come up," she said to the boy. And she stood waiting to receive him when he got to her door with a face of such eager sympathy, such pretty dumb apology in her manner, that he felt warmed and encouraged before she had spoken a word.

"It's so good of you to see me," he said, as he sat back in the chair she placed, and looked at her.

He had never before seen her like this, in the easy, simple setting of her small sitting-room. Lately, since the new rôle had been developing with every touch she gave it, as though she were breathing greater life into the character he had created than he had been capable of giving it, she had seemed to grow farther and farther away from him; nearer in a fine sort of intellectual companionship, but carried away from him by the success that was bound to come to her. Yesterday, indeed, she had seemed almost as far away as she had been that first night when she had read the rôle of *Percinet* for his criticism at Mrs. Cortelyou's country palace. But this afternoon, up here on a level nearly with the clock-tower and the old chimneys across the street, she seemed fearfully, sweetly approachable.

"I was afraid you wouldn't, you know," he went on, after a moment. "Braun must have behaved like a brute to offend you so, and, of course, you'd know I came from him."

Braun! She stiffened before his eyes. For a moment, in the strength of her interest in *Suzanne*, she had forgotten Braun. It came back upon her now in a flood of disgust; disgust that

extended itself to everything connected with him.

"Oh, please—please don't include me in anything he has done! That isn't just." Shaw leaned forward to protest. "You know—no, you don't, for I never dared—but, yes, you must know that I couldn't hurt you. I don't know what he has done, but whatever it is—"

She put out a hand, which he clasped gratefully. She was grateful, too, absurdly grateful, she said to herself, that this man should not know, and that he had not come to discuss the thing she could hardly name even to Kate Cortelyou.

"Forgive me," she said gently. "I'm so—cross that I can't be very just."

"I felt like spanking the little brute," the young fellow said, smiling comfortably over at her then. "He looked to me for all the world like a nasty little boy, while he was making his confession, all hunched up and whining. But it was such a guarded confession—some altogether kind and benevolent intention of his that you had misunderstood; some incomprehensible, quixotic quirk in you that made you mistake the most disinterested motives. I laughed at that, of course, openly. I couldn't make head or tail of the rest, and, frankly, I didn't want to, unless you cared to tell me."

"I couldn't. Oh—I couldn't!" she exclaimed, as he paused a moment.

"It isn't necessary, then," he said, with a sigh, and sat back soberly.

He had nourished a mad hope, born of her gentleness and this wonderful, informal meeting, that she might care to confide in him, that he might protect her against something, punish some one for hurting her—that it might be him she would choose to trust.

"But this is the way it starts." His voice and manner were quite formal now, and, as he sat back, she was shyly conscious of the change in him. "I was to tell you that he humbly begs your pardon; that the offense shall never be repeated; that (I think it runs this way; it's a queer jumble he gave me, but I guess I've got it), that

though that sort of thing was necessary, in his judgment, when you were unknown and still practically an amateur, that now you can be independent of all such false helps, and that the best advertisement will be the success which he is confident will be yours to-night."

She sat quite still, as though she were very attentive. But she was not. She was trying to bolster up her own resolve, to keep her mind upon her purpose, and not to wonder at the constraint in Shaw's voice and why it troubled her.

"Of course, Braun says——" he began, after a moment.

"Oh, what difference does it make what he says!" she cried. "The terrible thing is what he has done. Oh, not that—not that meanness of his, he can't help being despicable, I suppose. But, you see," she smiled forlornly up at him and there was a sob in her throat, "he has made it impossible for me to play *Suzanne*, and—and there'll be no success for me to-night—nor at all. For I'm leaving it, Mr. Shaw—the stage. I think—it has been a mistake."

"A mistake!"

"Yes, I thought I didn't care so much for some things as I do."

"What things?" he demanded harshly.

"Well—social position, for one thing. Oh, I knew you'd laugh at it," she went on hastily, as he made an impatient gesture.

She had known how foreign to this man's nature and the simple, unthinking sort of democracy that underlay his life, social distinctions were. Instinctively, in their intercourse hitherto, she had belittled, subdued that side of her own character, feeling its incongruity with his ideas and ideals. But now she was glad of his opposition; it was something to fight against, and she needed the stimulus her own defense might lend her.

"It's the esteem of people of my own set that I want," she went on eagerly, "and the unquestioning respect of those who are not of it for those who are.

Oh, not to be any longer in the anomalous position of the woman who has to battle for those subtle small decencies in expression, in manner that are the toll paid to her self-respect, the thing she's been accustomed to! Oh, I don't know what it is, but whatever it is or isn't, it's mine. It belongs to me. It's something that came to me, was mine at my birth!"

"Ah, a birthright of aristocracy," he sneered.

"Exactly! My birthright." She threw it back at him, warming at her defense, delighted that she had stirred him, and that the reaction of his belittlement of what had been precious to her should make it big to her and whole again, and so worth the sacrifice she was making. "There is such a thing as a birthright even in America. And this is mine. I feel declassed without it. To myself, I look shabby and squalid, lacking it. And this social squalor, this lack of position is something tangible to me—or it's stronger than if it were tangible."

"So it's the call of class you're answering?" he suggested ironically.

She flushed at the implication.

"I—have been disinherited, so to speak," she stammered. "But it isn't in my nature to give up what belongs to me without a struggle. I'm going back to get it. It isn't everything in the world, but it's much to me."

"It's always been a matter of wonder to me—as you're aware, Miss Chretien, I am of no class, I have no birthright—I've always marveled at people admitting the jurisdiction of the court. Who authorized it? What constitutes it?" His voice expressed polite curiosity.

"Oh, what difference does it make?" she cried, stung by his manner, "whether I admit its jurisdiction or not, while I am writhing under the power of its decree? And you could see the thing from my point of view, if you'd try, I don't pretend to be any better than anybody who hasn't this thing I have. I merely have it—or had it, and will have it again. What difference does it make to a soldier if his sword is broken

and he is disgraced in the presence of the army? It's only a symbol, after all. And what difference does it make to a police officer that his star is taken from him, or to a car-conductor that the bar of service is ripped from his sleeve? All that is what it means to me. My rank is taken from me. My place is unjustly declared vacant. My social honor is stained——"

"An honor conferred by a fat, commonplace little woman who——"

"Who happens to be the one person in the world who can rehabilitate me; whose receiving me on the old familiar terms will give the lie to every cruel tale that has been told of me. What is it makes an author's reputation? A critical edict from on high, from the few who know to the many who take on trust. And what is it makes a woman's name? That same stamp from one in authority; in my case, from the woman who happens to be the general of the army in which I serve."

"An army of cads officered by snobs!" he exclaimed wrathfully. Every word she said seemed to push him farther from her.

"Mr. Shaw, how dare you!"

"I don't know," he said miserably. To her surprise, the flame of anger in her eyes seemed suddenly to quench his own. "But I'd dare a lot to prevent your wrecking your career for a fancy—and such a fancy!" he continued, recovering. "Since when can't you live without society, dear society?"

"Since," she answered unsteadily, "since other things I prized higher were taken from me. No—no, before that. Oh, can't you see how it is to feel yourself expatriated? I could bear it when my heart and soul were in my work, and I was working with hope on my side. But now that's all gone. Oh, give me what's mine. Let it be mine unquestioned, as it should be, as it was, and you know I'll never think of it—I mean to pride myself upon it, to plume myself upon having the thing that some other girl hasn't. You know me better than to believe me capable of that nasty sort of social self-consciousness which is really only a sense

of inferiority, an uneasy fear of being found out, the mark of the impostor or the newly anointed. I'm neither of these." And then, as he was silent: "You know I'm not."

"Oh, no, the oil that sanctified you Cortelyous was extracted from the holiest of holy sources by Saint William Penn himself, who was a sort of silent partner of Jeffreys in his Bloody Assizes, and dealt in ransoms, extracting blood-money from the fathers and mothers of schoolgirls who had been guilty of such dire treason as walking in a procession to honor Monmouth." He had risen as he spoke.

"No, did he?" Flora smiled in spite of her earnestness. "But can't you see," she looked up at him standing grimly over her, "all the people I know, the real people, not the Brauns and the Beryl Blackburns, are these Cortelyous and Tettlows and Trotters and the rest of them. Their names mean nothing to you. To me, they are the babies I played with in the square, the boys I skated with, the girls I lived my school-days with at Miss Hurd's; the women at whose houses I spent Christmas holidays; the men who had a kindly eye and smile for me, and a fathering interest for one who had lost both mother and father. Their names bring before me pretty scenes we've been in together—nice interiors—our own church—— Oh, in short, they're my people. My heart beats with theirs. What I like they like. What troubles them affects me. We understand each other. Signs have a language with us. We speak the same tongue. We're the same kind of folk. They're my—class. Well, have it, if you will. It's true."

He bowed, dismissing the subject and taking his leave in the same gesture.

"Mr. Shaw," she said, rising hurriedly to detain him, "don't think too hardly of one cad in that army—a cashiered cad who didn't know yesterday what Squires was hinting at in that paper he had. I know now what he dared—what he dared to——"

"He'll not dare again." Shaw's voice was hard.

"How do you know? How can you tell?" she asked bitterly.

"You won't be angry, if I tell you?"

She shook her head uncertainly.

"I told him I'd kick him out of the theater if he ever spoke to you again off the stage. I'd see that Braun did the figurative kicking; the physical, the literal part of it, I'd attend to myself. He knows I mean it."

"Oh——" She shrank shamed into herself. But in the same moment she became conscious of another feeling stronger than her repugnance at the need of being championed. "I—like you for that," she cried, putting out her hands to him. "I do like you for that!"

Her warmth did not seem to touch him.

"Why," he asked, "what man wouldn't feel that way? It's your part to ignore the thing—I thought you were doing it—and ours, the men that know you, to stamp on it when we meet it. I'm glad you're not offended. I was half-afraid you might resent my interference."

"No—no." She stood a moment silent, and he turned to the door. "Mr. Shaw," she said timidly, "haven't you a word of regret for *Suzanne*?"

"Why, what sort of fellow do you think me," he cried, flushing, "to come here and throw myself and *Suzanne* on your pity! It's what Braun hoped for, I suppose, and that's why he carefully concealed from me your intention of leaving us. He gave me to understand only that you were incensed at him, and, for the sake of our first night and your peace of mind when so much was at stake, I was to carry his apologies to you. But do you really think me the sort of man that appeals to a woman to change her plans for his sake, that appeals weakly——"

"Oh," she exclaimed hysterically, sinking down at the table and burying her head upon the letter she had commenced so stanchly, "I wish you were! I wish you would—appeal. For I—find I can't do it, anyway, and if you'd only appeal——" There were tears in her eyes as she lifted them to him, but

her mouth was smiling in whimsical recognition of her weakness.

"*Suzanne!*" he cried, throwing down his hat. "Oh, but society——" he added.

"Oh, how ungenerous! Never mind, I shall have that, too. Wait. I don't know how it will come, but I'll live down, in my own particular case, anyway, the belief the world loves to hug to itself that a woman on the stage is a woman without character. And I'll win back my sword from the Missis some way some day," she half-sang as she took the closely written sheets of her letter from the table, tore them across, and dropped them into the basket. "Come, let me make you a cup of tea. We'll have supper—oh, the least bit of supper—and then go down to the theater together. If *Suzanne* does what you expect of her, after the play to-night, I'll be hungry. And then it will be your turn to play host—will you?"

## VII.

On an October morning, one of those sharp, clear New York mornings, Miss Chrétien sat in a kimono sipping her coffee and reading the papers.

It was a barefaced pretense this of reading the papers. They had all been read long ago. For her, they consisted this morning of from half a column to a column relating to New York's reception of a new play called "The Strategy of *Suzanne*," in which one Flora Chrétien played the title rôle, and, incidentally, made her New York début.

They lay about her in an unconsidered heap, these great metropolitan dailies—great in bulk and great in the seriousness with which they proclaimed their own greatness—each at once testifying to, and adding to, her success.

"Not that we're indifferent, my lady Flora," she was saying, with gay irony to herself. "We're not quite so accustomed to New York notices as to take such puffs as these as a matter of course—not yet. No, you're all lovely," she looked down over the edge of her saucer to the littered floor, "and I'm not a bit ungrateful, but—but fancy——"

she squeezed a newspaper affectionately that was pressed under her arm—"fancy Boxton, the great Boxton, who makes and unmakes with a click of his typewriter, saying such things of a—why, just a little old beginner from Philadelphia—oh!"

She gave a joyous little squeal and set down her half-filled cup in order to spread the paper again before her. It opened willingly at the proper place for, for nearly an hour Flora Chretien had been doing just this; glancing apologetically at the heap of papers at her feet, and rereading Boxton's estimate of her performance the night before and her possibilities in performance to come. Already she knew the most enthusiastic part of the criticism by heart; but merely to repeat the critic's words to herself was not nearly so fascinating an occupation as rereading the delightful stuff. So with a face as sober and attentive as so young and happy a face could be made to be, she set herself patiently to read the opening and the review of the play itself; while she kept a hand on her heart and a tight rein on her attention, that she might at least once approach the ecstatic part of it in the proper order and not permit her dancing eyes to skip it all till they should reach the first mention of her name.

Yet despite herself, those precious words of praise sang their accompaniment to every line she read. You couldn't have convinced Flora Chretien this morning that that particular paper was not printed in music on sunshine. She came to the paragraph headed by her name almost breathless with self-denial and anticipation. But something else came at precisely that minute—a knock at the door.

She sprang to her feet and her eyes looked in dismay from her negligée to the clock. Had she listened so long to that sweetest Loreleis as to forget her engagement to lunch with Oliver Shaw at one?

No, for it was not twelve yet. She hurried to the door with a sigh, half of relief, half of disappointment—she longed to hear what he should say of

this wonderful article of Boxton's—and on opening it was quickly clasped in the arms of a girl all ruffles and lace, whose slight, insouciant daintiness seemed made to exploit the prevailing exuberant fashions and to excuse them.

"Trix—oh, Trix!" she cried, hugging the girl to her, in her excitement and pleasure dropping Boxton's criticism for the first time since her eyes had fallen upon it.

"But you weren't to come to me," she added, in a quick aftermath of remembering pride. "As I wrote you and Kate, I won't have you stealing to me like criminals or have to stand trial before Aunt Eunice. But sit down, you dear, small Trixy!" She pulled the girl down beside her. "Do you suppose I can think even of Aunt Eunice when you're with me after long months? And how long have you been in New York? Did you come to see 'Suzanne' last night? Such a house—such a good, good show! And, Trix Tettlow, have you seen what Boxton says? Trix, my dearie, you look pale."

"Do I? I suppose I do. I didn't sleep well last night, I was packing." Miss Tettlow looked over her friend's shoulder at the small mirror beyond and ruefully rubbed her cheeks. "I do look nasty," she said, with concern. "And to-day of all days!" The exclamation escaped her, but she was relieved that Flora had not noticed it.

"Not nasty; mighty sweet and dainty, but—why, your two deepest despairs must be nearly banished, Trix, your fear of being fat and never getting to be eighteen."

"But I look eighteen, don't I, Flo?" she asked anxiously.

"*Gott bewahre!*" as Mr. Braun says. If you look eighteen, I must look twenty-two. And I mustn't. I can't afford to. Not this season—nor next. After that I won't mind, but we'll tour the country with 'Suzanne' when we get through here. But, nonsense—come, talk to me. Is everybody well? Kate? Trixy, I get that old lonesome, homesick feeling at sight of you. When did you get to town?"

"I—just arrived, Flora." Miss Tett-



low's light voice was not altogether ingenuous.

"In that dress?" Flora demanded.

With a side glance at her ruffles, Miss Tettlow nodded her head. She looked to Flora like a wary, small bird with a secret to hide, whose every conscious motion makes her pretense more apparent and more nearly betrays her. Only Trix's secret was not apparent.

"I didn't intend to come over till a later train, but—I changed my mind and came away in a hurry. Have you heard, Flo, that Trotter's to marry Millicent, after all?" she asked quickly. "It's to be next week."

"I'm very glad—dear old Trotter! But, Trix, if you left Philadelphia at such an ungodly hour, and didn't sleep last night, you must be exhausted. Won't you lie down and let me make you comfortable while we chat? You surely can't hurry away now. If I'd known you were going to come I shouldn't have had you, but now you can't go away. I can't let you."

Miss Tettlow regarded her friend a moment suspiciously. But Flora's solicitous face seemed to disarm her.

"I am wretchedly tired, and I'm cross—and nervous—and—who's that!" with a cry she started to her feet as there came a knock at the door.

Flora looked at her, amazed.

"You're not well, Trix," she said softly. "What is the matter?"

"The matter?" Trix repeated sharply. "Why, what could be the matter? I—just didn't want us to be interrupted, that's all. If—Flo," she caught her arm, "if that should—happen to be any one for me, you'll say I'm not here, won't you?"

"Why, certainly, if you wish." Flora pointed to the bedroom beyond, toward which Trix hurried, and then opened the door.

"It's only a telegram, Trix," she called, as she dismissed the boy.

"A telegram!" Miss Tettlow's pale face grew paler. "Oh, what—what about?"

"What about?" Flora laughed. "Oh, dear, it needn't be about anything. This," she balanced the envelope light-

ly in her palm, "might be from Mr. Braun asking me to extend our contract for another six years—which I won't do. Or it might be from his partner Lowenthal. An artist, that man—I'd like to work for him. Or it might be from Mr. Shaw changing the hour for our luncheon. He's awfully sought after, you know, since 'Suzanne' has made such a hit. Or—just a line of congratulation from anybody. I've had a dozen this morning—one from the great Max Tausig himself. Fancy that! Do you wonder my head's turned?"

But Miss Tettlow was not in a wondering mood this morning; evidently her own affairs so preoccupied her that she could only be relieved at the absence of any personal connection in her friend's message. She turned again toward the bedroom, and Flora opened the envelope.

*Sylvette* left home this morning at nine. Must have discovered we'd learned her intention to join Surryhne in New York. Fear they're to be married there. Should she come to you, keep her if possible till Aunt E. comes. She left on the 10:21.

STRAFOREL.

An exclamation escaped from Flora's lips, and Trix turned with sudden suspicion.

"Such—such impudence!" exclaimed Flora quickly.

"What is?" Trix's voice was curious, but its tone spoke relief.

"Oh—nothing, dear."

Flora tore the message across and threw it into a basket. She was fighting for time and playing upon Trix Tettlow's curiosity, to pique which, she remembered, led invariably to success, if one was only guided by the crooked laws of perversity.

"But I'd like to know—unless it's something you'd rather conceal from me."

On the current of Miss Tettlow's high, little voice was borne the plaintive intonation of a proud and pained friend whose discretion is impugned.

"It's—not anything I want to conceal from you, dear."

Flora was thinking hard. She hur-

ried to the girl and put an arm about her, drawing her toward her with a sudden tenderness that brought tears to Trix's bright, worried eyes. "Come, let me be helping you to take off your things, so that you can lie down and rest, Trixy. The telegram," she added casually, but carefully turning her back as she threw a comforter and a pillow on the couch, "is from Beverly Surryhne."

There was a sudden clatter behind her. When she turned, Trix Tettlow was gathering up her watch and purse that had dropped upon the silver toilet-articles spread out upon the bureau. Her childish face was flushed and excited, but her little mouth was hard.

"You're sure you don't mean Aunt Eunice?" she asked sarcastically.

Miss Chrétien turned and looked at her with sincere surprise. Evidently it was not going to be very easy; who would have accused this doll-like little Trix of such capacity?

"Aunt Eunice?" she repeated softly. "I wish it were. For a line from my dear old Missis I'd give—all that bundle of messages over yonder."

"You haven't heard a word from her in all this time?" Trix's voice had softened.

"Not a word. How is she? I couldn't bear to hear that—"

"Oh, she's quite well, though I think she misses you," Miss Tettlow interrupted, in the tone of a penitent child. "But—do you mind telling me in what way Mr. Surryhne was impudent?"

"Does he still interest you?" Flora laughed gaily as she helped her friend into a lounging-gown; she believed she had found the means to her end. "I thought that old admiration of yours was the effect of mere but excessive youth, romantic youth. There, dear, lie down. There's nothing in the telegram but a message of congratulation—but I don't want Mr. Surryhne's congratulations."

"I heard"—Miss Tettlow paused just as she was about to lie down. "I don't suppose it's true, but I heard that a girl, some one we know, too, ran away from home to marry him. But she got

frightened when she got here (he's been in New York, you know, ever since Mrs. Surryhne's death) and—and the wedding never came off. At least, it hasn't yet."

"Oh!"

"Yes."

The two girls exchanged a look. It was an odd mixture of mystification and incredulity from Flora's blue eyes; of wariness and disingenuousness from Trix's gray ones. Then Miss Tettlow lay back with a sigh, buried her curly little head in the pillow, and closed her eyes.

"There's that nuisance of a 'phone!" Flora exclaimed quickly. "Just a minute, Trix."

She flew into the next room, rang for a boy, and wrote a swift line on a telegraph-blank.

Come direct to me. *Sylvette* is here.

She signed it *Percinet*, addressed it to Mrs. Cortelyou on the 10:21 train, to be delivered at Jersey City, and had just shut the door after the departing messenger when Miss Tettlow, trailing the old-gold comforter behind her, came in upon her.

"The wrong number," lied Flora breathlessly, in answer to the question Trix's eyes, her lips, her chin, her very tilted, small nose seemed to ask.

Miss Tettlow settled down into a big chair.

"Flo," she began tentatively, bending over and affecting to pull the comforter about her slender, tiny figure, "there never was really anything between you and—Mr. Surryhne?"

"Nothing but contempt and detestation on my part," Flora cried hotly, "and on his that cruel conviction that an actress is fair game; that whatever difficulties she may put in the way of a man's pursuit, she is still to be bought—in one commodity or another, at his price or a higher. Oh!" She struck her hands together passionately.

"My dear—my dear!" Miss Tettlow reached up a miniature hand and pulled Flora down to the low stool beside her. Once there, she pushed her

head softly down upon her lap and sat, quietly caressing it for a moment.

"Flo, dear," she said, after a time, in which Miss Chrétien had quickly pushed her own griefs behind her and was canvassing one plan after another that should result in Beatrix Tettlow's disillusion, "that girl I was telling you about—the one that thought she had fallen in love with Beverly Surryhne—I can—sort of understand her point of view. Can't you? Admit he is a fascinating fellow."

"Not to me, dear."

"Well, he was to her. There was spice and strength to him. He was—different, and he was—forbidden. She was a silly little thing, I—I've heard, that everybody treated as though she were a baby. She didn't really know she had a heart and was a woman—though she pretended and flirted and chattered—till he told her so. And he made love in a way—a way that one never sees except in a book or on the stage or in a foreigner. And he is handsome."

"Ye-es."

Trix laughed softly. "Don't be stingy about it; even Kate Cortelyou says he's handsome."

"Did she tell this girl so?" Flora looked up into her friend's eyes.

But Miss Tettlow softly pushed Flora's head till it rested again on her knees.

"She didn't say it to the girl." She spoke cautiously. "But the girl overheard her say it to the girl's—a relative of hers."

"Yes?" Flora broke the silence that followed.

"Yes. They had found out she was coming to New York to meet Beverly Surryhne, to—marry him. They planned to take the same train she took. She overheard this, by chance, through no fault of her own, really, and—"

"And she took an earlier train to outwit them," Flora added.

She dared not look up. She felt Trix's quick start, and was conscious that her hand paused in the half-completed caressing stroke to her own hair that had accompanied the recital, punc-

tuating it, commenting upon it, seeming in a way to make it easier.

"Yes, partly that." Miss Tettlow's voice was very low. Flora, though her heart almost stopped to listen, could not say whether it spoke truth or not. "She had become frightened before that, and was even then trying to find a way to break loose."

"Oh, then"—Flora put aside the hand that would have kept her still looking down, and caught it in her own. "Then, feeling as she did, she turned, of course, to these relatives for help. She confided in them, and—"

"No." Miss Tettlow's voice was firm. "She resented their interference, their treating her as a child. She would not bear to be the object of their deceitful stratagems and schemes. She wanted to show them that she could carry out her plans in spite of all that they could do. And she did."

"She couldn't have been very fond of them, could she, or believed very strongly in their love for her?"

Miss Tettlow did not speak.

"It's the queerest thing, Trix," Flora went on, "how one gets to long for just that same loving interference that offended this girl; one like me, I mean, who—"

"Who didn't stand it, either, when people said 'no' to you."

"No, that's true; but—"

"Well, this girl—"

"But I never felt that those who said 'no' were my enemies, Trix. They were my best-beloved, who had misunderstood me, through love, not through hate. And I hoped—I shall never stop hoping that they'll understand me in time."

"Flo, if—if this girl we were talking about had come to you knowing you had thrown off the yoke yourself, would you have helped her out?"

"With all my heart."

"Even—even if the people she was fighting against happened to be the same people you feel that way to? Would you?"

"What would she ask me to do, Trix? Not help her to throw herself away on such a man as Surryhne?"

"No-o." Miss Tettlow's voice had lost its accent of candor. "She had got frightened, you must remember, and wanted not to go on with the thing herself."

"Come—tell me, Trixy, what am I to do?"

"Flo—when I found that I had to take an earlier train, I telegraphed him to meet me—here. That's why I jumped so at the knock; I thought it was——"

"Here! At my rooms!" Flora jumped to her feet.

"I didn't say it was your rooms. I—oh, Flo!" A sob shook the girl's breast, and she burst into tears. "I couldn't just go to a ho—tel," she sobbed, bowing her face in her hands, "like a n-nasty little orphan and be m-married there without a—soul for a b-bridesmaid!"

Flora was pulling off her kimono and getting out a gown; glancing at the clock and at the glass and dressing and undressing at the same time. Besides this, she was laughing; laughing interiorly and very tenderly at this bride-to-be, bowed in grief, and with the comforter draped about her so that she looked like a small, golden-headed mandarin sitting in tearful state.

"So it isn't true," she asked, when she could command her voice, "that the girl got frightened and wanted not to go on with the thing?"

"It's—partly true," wailed Trix. "Why, Flora," she added, lifting her head, the tears still shining on her lashes, "what a stunning frock! You always were lovely in white, but why—why——"

"If one's to be bridesmaid," cried Flora gaily, "one must be a credit to the occasion. Fortunately, the gown's new, just sent home, and——"

"Oh, Flo—you dear, dear Flo! You will, then? Oh, I'm so happy!" Trix leaped to her feet. "You see I was frightened, but—I say, who made it, Flo?" She was fingering the crape and the lace with admiring fingers. "I never saw you look so lovely."

Smiling, Flora stooped and Trix kissed her. It was a slight, passing

caress, birdlike in its superficial sweetness.

"It is to be a marriage, then?" Flora demanded.

Miss Tettlow's eyes wavered. "I—think so," she conceded hesitatingly.

A quick laugh came from Flora. She could laugh now; the girl's gentle unwillingness had made the way free before her.

"You'll look like the bride yourself, Flo," Trix went on plaintively, as her friend stood, prettily self-conscious, in her beauty before her. "There's something dinky and cheap about being married this way, isn't there? I suppose at Millicent's wedding, and I can't be there—Flora!"

Frantically Trix clutched her friend's arm. Again there was a knock at the door.

"I—am afraid, Flora," she whimpered. "Do you think he's a very bad man?"

"Very," replied Miss Chrétien, without a smile. "Let me send word down that there's no one in."

"No-o."

The knock was repeated.

"Oh, what shall I do!" cried Trix.

"Perhaps it isn't he." Flora went to the door.

She returned, though, with Surryhne's card, and silently placed it in her friend's hand.

But Beatrix would not receive it. A sudden panic had taken possession of her. She fled in her dishabille back to the bedroom, and the cord fluttered down upon the comforter she had left behind her.

Flora stooped and picked it up. She flew about the room putting it in order. She lifted the down quilt with one hand and Trix's hat and gloves with the other, and threw them all behind the portières, where Trix, her fingers in her ears and her head in the pillows, lay as though she expected to be dragged forth, resisting bitterly, to meet her bridegroom.

But no imperious summons came to Trix. And she found herself sitting bolt upright, after a few moments, with tingling cheeks and angry eyes.

Then she heard his voice.

"Monsieur!"

It was a warm, low voice, with a trick of significant emphasis that Miss Tettlow remembered—and deplored.

"Just because she's got a good frock on and her cheeks are probably pink from flying about," she said scornfully to herself. She also quickly remembered, and as decidedly deplored, the old nickname, whose use, it seemed to her, Flora might at least discourage.

"I know," Flora was saying, "that you didn't expect to see me, but—" And Trix knew she must be holding out a hand.

"A man does not expect miracles," said Surryhne softly, "he only falls down and worships when they come to pass."

Miss Chrétien laughed. And in the bedroom beyond Miss Tettlow instinctively balled her small hand into a revengeful fist.

"Won't you be the exception and sit down instead?" Flora's voice was lightly gracious.

"What is it, Monsieur?" he asked. "Have the skies fallen—have you relented? Are we to be——"

"Relations—very distant cousins-in-law. Is that what you mean?" she asked gaily.

"Oh!" There was a pause. "And you approve?" he asked at length.

"You haven't asked for my approval."

An irresistible impulse seized Beatrix Tettlow. Noiselessly she pulled off her low shoes and crept to the portière. She could see here. She could see Flora in that gracious gown of white which she wore as only an actress can wear clothes, and opposite her Surryhne, leaning forward, his eyes upon that mutinous, irregular face so softly pink, so gay and alluring.

"And I had only to ask favors of you to get them, eh—Monsieur?"

She threw out her hands. It was a pretty gesture, a bit deprecating, a bit apologetic, a bit of relenting and even of ridicule in it. Furiously Miss Tettlow said to herself that it was more than a bit promising.

"Where is Miss Tettlow now?"

Surryhne's sudden question sent that young lady whirling away from her post in a panic.

"I am expecting her every moment," said Flora.

In the short silence that followed, a queer contraction caught Trix's throat and held it. She wanted something. There was something she did not want. In the confusion of her thought she could not say what it was she longed for or prayed to be spared, but a quick vision of Mrs. Cortelyou's ample, stately little figure and her resolute, fine old face came to her granddaughter, and Trix knew the thing she yearned for most was to feel the old lady's arms forgivingly about her.

"And I—am not sure she will come at all." Surryhne's words came slowly.

Miss Tettlow crept back to the portières.

"Really? Do you know that idea occurred to me, too?" Flora was leaning forward, smiling.

"You mean——"

"That she might get frightened and want not to go on with the thing!"

"And I be left lamenting, eh? The inconsolable, jilted lover! Ah, Monsieur, Monsieur, I distrust you. You're an actress, but—what a beautiful woman you have become!"

Beatrix Tettlow behind the portières told herself that she would almost risk detection for the satisfaction of seeing her friend's face, which was turned from her now.

"And what a furious beautiful girl you were the first time I told you so," he laughed.

"Do you know——" Flora had left her chair. She was walking toward the window. "Has she told you that she is not eighteen yet?"

If Surryhne's eyes had not been following that round, graceful figure and the soft lines of its long-trained white gown, he might have seen the portières shake and stiffen; for Miss Tettlow had grasped at their folds as at something that might help her to control herself.

"No! Is that true—or part of the

acting, Monsieur? A brave little thing, isn't she, for a child? You mean that I would not dare to carry her off if she is under age? Bah! Do you suppose that would stop me, if she loved me and if I— Oh, well, it doesn't matter, anyway, for she would have been here by now if she were coming. Miss Chrétien, you see before you—or behind you—what is so attractive outside that window?—you behold a deserted lover. Alas! But it wasn't love with her—it was fascination she felt and darenedviltry and flattery and curiosity. But love— She's a baby."

She turned upon him. "Yet you'd have—"

"I'd have opened my mouth if a lark ready broiled had flown into it, Monsieur. My Monsieur," he came toward her, his hands outstretched, "if I had married this baby cousin of yours, we two, you and I, would have been cousins, companions. I'd have been near the rose, the rose whose fragrance intoxicated me when it was only a bud, such a thorny little bud! No—even your dropping your rôle shall not stop me now. I wanted you—I wanted you. It seems to me, upon my soul, I have always, always been wanting you. And I should have had you if I had only cared less for you; if I could have waited and pretended and bowed to the Puritan in you. Yes, you make-believe Puritan! You're only half a woman off the stage. Only when you're there the fulness of your nature reveals itself. Your *Percinet* discovered the actress in you to that fellow Shaw, but to me it discovered the woman in that prudish girl. And you could have loved me. And you would. Hush! I swear you would. I'd have compelled your love in spite of you, and you would have come to me as passion-sweet as I was passion-strong. But you were Prudence Purity embodied, or pretended to yourself you were; and I wasn't free and you were afraid of me. Oh, yes, you were! Oh, shake your pale, pretty head and tear your little hands—what proof is that? Give them to me—I love your hands, Flora; they're alive, they're strong and small

and sweet, like you. You kept me away from you like a coward. You didn't dare meet me and brave the attack. But it is that fear, that delicious fear, that betrays you, sweetheart. Let me try now. I dare you to let me try to make you care, now that I can enter convention's list in due form and— Ah!" At a tap on the door he dropped her hands. "Precisely like a play, isn't it, Miss Chrétien?" he added.

She flew past him and threw open the door. And in a moment she had her arms about a shaken little old lady standing there, and was whispering to her: "It's all right—it's all right, Missis—my Missis!" Over her shoulder she called: "You'll excuse me, Mr. Surryhne?" and to a bell-boy who was trying to hand her a card: "No, I'm not at home—not to anybody, not to anybody!"

She swept Mrs. Cortelyou back into the bedroom and drew the sliding-door closed behind them.

## VIII.

It was apparent that Miss Chrétien was in a temper.

"It's the surest sign of the big head, that's what it is. And you're to blame for it yourself, Izzy," declared Beryl Blackburn. She was in the wings berating the manager in a whisper in the few moments preceding her entrance upon the stage. "She's permitting herself the luxury of flying off the handle just like any ordinary woman—not a Cortelyou. If you take my advice you'll give her part to Marie Avon and teach her a lesson."

"Who—Avon? She needs it."

"No, Chrétien; she needs it."

"And cut the stuffing out of the play and make Beryl's rôle so much bigger, eh?"

"Don't be nasty. It's a silly play, anyway. Whoever heard of an ingénue-star?"

"Not Marie Avon. Didn't she muff it last night when—"

"And didn't Chrétien herself to-night—"

"She did do that first entrance rot-



ten. And she knows it, I'll bet; that's what makes her so tempery."

"Not much. When a woman makes a fool of herself, Isadore Braun, it's because some man won't let her make a fool of him." Miss Blackburn winked knowingly.

"You think," began Braun, in dismay, "that she's gone on some society fellow over in Phil——"

"I think you're a goose, Izzy," interrupted Miss Blackburn good-naturedly. "But never mind that. The idea of letting her cut a performance just to go over to Philadelphia. The public won't stand for it, to pay their money for——"

"Oh, yes, they will. That's just what they love to stand for—to pay their money and see an understudy in the part that belongs to a swell who's playing bridesmaid at a Cortelyou-Trotter-Tettlow wedding, at a house where they couldn't get the tips of their noses inside the doors. The public's a cad, Beryl, that's what it is. So'm I, and so are you. Why, just look at the house to-night. And Mrs. Cortelyou herself in the box yonder! (I swear I would have given odds against ever getting her there. She don't like me, Mrs. C. Tausig bet me I wouldn't ever see her there. I took him up, but just for the principle of the thing; it won't do to let him think he can take a fall out of you. But I thought it was good-by, money, that bet.) But from Mrs. C. herself down through all the swells—for Kreton's on top again since the old lady loves her so—and up to the gallery, every servant and shop-girl in town is bound to have a look at her; to see what kind of woman it must be who hobnobs with the oldest families, not only over in Quakertown but here, too, and cuts the poor, cheap millionaire set dead. Oh, no, it ain't a good ad—not a bit of it! And trust Isadore to use it for all the traffic'll bear. Why, it's better than that old dodge of mine about——"

But gradually he became aware that he was talking in vain. She was not listening. In a moment her cue would come, and she was already preening her

plumage like a bird about to take flight. She played a rôle that was beautifully suited to her, that of a charmingly light, self-indulgent butterfly of a woman, soulless but not heartless, superficial but not hard, inconsequential, extravagant, ease-loving, selfish, but dainty as thistle-down and as irresponsible. And the artist in her joyed in it so that she forgot even Flora Chretien's star-hood while she was playing it.

Philosophically Mr. Braun shrugged his little self and sought safety. He saw his ingénue-star coming down the corridor from her dressing-room. He wondered, knowing that she had but one more entrance in this scene, and that just at the last, why she should be in the wings so early. But, being forewarned of her state of mind, he judged it prudent not to meet her.

Shaw, coming in just then from the street rather later than was his custom, met the disconsolate little manager going out. Braun promptly unbosomed himself.

"I can't make out what ails her. You'd think she'd have everything she wants—a hit here in New York and thick as flies in honey with Mrs. Cortelyou, a house like this, and—Beryl says it's some swell she's gone on that's turned her down," he concluded, winding up the tale of his woes. "What do you think about it, Shaw?"

"I don't think about it," answered Shaw shortly.

"No? No, neither do I." Mr. Braun shot an apprehensive glance up at him. The young man's face was not encouraging. Evidently there were not many perfectly good-natured members of this theatrical family to-night. "Well, she's discharged her dresser," continued the lone amiable one, "and she sat on Ginger so hard he's grinning on the wrong side of his mouth yet."

"And what did she do to Braun?" asked Shaw, relenting.

"Not for Isadore!" Mr. Braun curled his beard archly. "He knows when to lay low. I'm off for a game with Tausig. Come?"

Shaw shook his head.

"You ought to play poker," counseled Braun gently. "It's fine for the nerves. Tausig loses—always. Then he loses his temper when he loses his money. He plays like a child. And he will play. Curious, ain't it, it always rests me to see Tausig play poker? It's really amusing."

But Shaw was not in the frame of mind to appreciate amusement. He stood—after Braun had gone chuckling every foot of the way down the corridor—looking over toward the prompter's chair where Flora Chrétien sat.

She didn't look as though her attack of ill humor had left her any happier than those upon whom it had been wreaked. And Shaw told himself that he was glad of it; glad that she did not look the gay, conquering worldling, coming back with contemptuous condescension, to achieve an accessory triumph here; dilettantly to stake merely a part of her hope and ambition on the game in which men like himself wagered their all.

She looked up and caught his eye as he stood irresolute for a moment watching her. A quick flame of red shot to her cheek, and the angry light in her eye testified that Miss Chrétien was still unappeased. Yet those same eyes seemed to invite him.

"I hope, Mr. Shaw," she said formally as he came over to her, "that you received my note of apology for breaking our engagement—a week ago to lunch?"

"Yes, thank you. I got it," he said.

She looked at him curiously.

"As I wrote you, my aunt's unexpected arrival quite turned my head. I suppose you must have sent up a card, but—there were family matters—"

She ended vaguely. "Well?" she demanded, as he remained silent.

"Shall I say," he returned, a hard note in his voice answering the challenge in hers, "that it was of no consequence, or that I was grievously disappointed?"

"Whichever is true," she said a bit unsteadily.

He did not speak.

"Well?" she repeated peremptorily.

"Neither is true—quite." He was speaking under his breath, but she was conscious of the emotion that made his voice tense. "That appointment to lunch with you the morning after your triumph—our triumph—you owed it to me. It meant more than a mere engagement that you might break—and without even seeing me! No, neither is true, for the excuse—your excuse was not true."

She looked at him in dumb astonishment.

"It was just a trifle that happened to prevent my accepting it as truth, though," he said, with a wry smile, regaining his poise. "The cheeky little bell-boy who returned with my card got angry at my persistence—you see, I was fool enough to persist that he was mistaken and that you would at least see me or send me some word—well, he gratuitously informed me that your 'other fellow had the inside track, and had cut me out.' He meant Surryhne, of course. I found that out, too—oh, quite incidentally—when we met at the hotel entrance going out."

He paused expectantly, but Mooney, the prompter, came up just then, and she rose to give him his place.

It was Mooney's habit to wander about, book in hand; a habit which, oddly, had never led to disastrous results, for he seemed to have an instinct that invariably brought him back to his place when he was needed. He was a restless soul whom the glamour of the stage had caught up in middle age and whirled out of his sober clerkship into the dual rôle of prompter and property-man. Beyond this he was doomed never to go, though he still hoped to become an actor (he had an old-fashioned passion for the rôles of *Virginus* and *Ingomar*, in which he was letter perfect), but was wont to remark, in the tone the fox might have used in commenting upon the acidity of certain grapes, that "Th' Thrust has killed rale actin' an' th' Legit'mate Drama lies writhin' in its t'ls. There's no place for a tragedyen these dejinate days."

He stood beside them a moment, and Shaw, who feared Flora might leave, began hastily to talk to her.

"He favored me, Surryhne did, as we walked down to the corner together"—he was bitterly disappointed at her silence, but he tried to assume a matter-of-fact tone—"with his opinion of 'Suzanne.' He has seen the play often enough to know it by heart, seems to me—he's here again to-night, isn't he?"

She did not answer.

"Well—he declares that *Suzanne* is a monstrosity, an impossibility. There is no such thing, he insists. 'The French, Shaw,' he said in that soft way he has of laying down the law, 'created the ingénue—and made her sans heart, sans wit, sans everything but prettiness. Prettiness, not beauty, mind you. They knew the species through and through. They took it bodily out of real life and transplanted it to the stage, where it flourishes still under the warm, glad sky of France. But you—you conceive an American ingénue. An American ingénue! Can't you see for yourself the very incompatibility of the two words? A woman of resource, of daring, of independence—and an ingénue! Absurd. The *Suzanne* who attracts *Wethered's* attention, who throws herself in his way to steal him from his threatened intrigue with the other woman—she is not an ingénue, my dear sir, trust me. She is——'" Shaw broke off suddenly. But he continued with an effort: "Quite an interesting point of view and characteristic, isn't it?"

She ignored his question.

"What were you going to say? 'She is——' what did he say?" she demanded.

"A Jezebel."

With its very utterance he would have unsaid the word, if he could. For, as he said it, it seemed to be aimed at her, not at the character he himself had created. But it was too late. She had turned from him and was looking out on to the stage. He could not see her face, and she stood quite still. In the pause the restless prompter shut his

book over his finger and moved away, and Shaw said to himself that if she would only look at him kindly, frankly, in the old way, he could beg her pardon and make his misery his excuse for having hurt her.

But she did not turn. She was still looking out upon the scene when she spoke, and her words and her tone were so different from what he might have expected that his impulse died within him.

"How clever she is to-night—Beryl!" she said wistfully. "With her in such a mood and playing like that, this next scene between us would have been great—but for me."

"I hope you're well," he said stiffly. "No. I'm furious."

"Braun told me we'd all better stand from under," he said, with an attempt at facetiousness.

"You've just come in?" she asked, noticing for the first time that he had his coat over his arm and his hat in his hand.

"Yes, why?"

"Because then you didn't see how wretchedly I flunked in *Suzanne's* first entrance. They told me Marie Avon had been doing it vilely while I was away; she couldn't have made a worse *Suzanne* than I am to-night."

"I'm sorry——" he began politely.

"The whole house is full of my friends, people I care for, and——"

"Including Surryhne. It must make you very proud," he snarled.

"——and," she went on, as though he had not spoken, "I play like a stick—like a bad-tempered, stupid amateur!"

"I'm very sorry," he said again. "Perhaps you're overcritical."

"No, I'm not," she flashed back at him. "And you're not—sorry."

"I said I was."

"Yes, you said it in the tone one uses when he's not only not sorry, but thoroughly indifferent—or pretends to be. I'm very unhappy."

"Impossible! To have just been maid of honor at the Cortelyou-Trotter-Tettlow festivities and—unhappy?"

She caught her breath with an ex-

clamation. "That's cowardly of you," she said slowly, "and stupid, besides."

He smiled with ironical deprecation.

"I expected it, of course, from Beryl Blackburn and the rest," she exclaimed. "I knew Braun would fawn on me and she would hate me and misunderstand me, and they'd all look at me as an outsider, when I want—I want passionately to be one of you. And I deserve to be, too—when I don't play like an imbecile!" She struck her hands together angrily. "But you—it's detestable of you. To-night when I wanted so to succeed, when you've accustomed me to rely on your sympathy and understanding, to feel the silent help your encouragement gives, to have this—this attitude of yours like—a bur in my slipper, a thing I must be conscious of at every step, annoying, irritating me, keeping my mind from my work——"

"The artistic temperament, Miss Chrétien!" he interrupted. "As for me, I don't know whether to be flattered that I am at all, or to be offended because I am merely a bur."

His words were savagely ungracious, but something in their tone soothed her. At any rate, she said to herself almost contentedly, he was not happy, either.

"And all because," she said plaintively, "I'm a bit of a snob. But all women are that, and——"

"Oh!" he exclaimed, under his breath, and she rejoiced to note that now it was his voice that trembled. "Do you suppose I really care for that—that part of it! The idea of a woman with brains, with talent, with the practical good sense you've got being at the mercy of the idiotic society quirk—that is an absurdity, of course, but I've gotten used to it. May your sweet Snobship be thoroughly happy," he said, and the break in his voice soothed her inexpressibly.

"But my Snobship isn't," she interpolated softly.

"It's nearly time for you to go on." He was slipping into his overcoat. "Nature makes women, it seems to me, in a fit of caprice," he said, slowly turn-

ing his hat over in his hands. "They are her experimental cultures, a sort of mental monstrosity, like the physical ones my old biology professor used to create when he planted a head where a tail should be or budded an arm in the place where a leg ought to grow. She——"

"Now, thank you!" Flora Chrétien was herself again.

"——she wants to see what she can do, I suppose; not what's worth doing. Some day, it may be, she'll prove something by it—Lord knows! All she has done so far is to make men miserable by her fool laboratory work. A man can comprehend and adapt himself to an all-fool or a human being (being one or the other himself); but to fall in love with one of these freak works of nature——"

"Example: Flora Chrétien," she whispered gaily.

"——is hell on earth. When it isn't heaven!"

He hadn't meant to say it. He could hardly credit his having said it, yet a something victoriously glowing about her made him know how inevitable his words were.

"I believe women were born without mercy," he added quickly. (She was about to go on; in a moment she would be in the midst of the scene with Beryl Blackburn, which was the climax of the first act.) "There isn't one of you that will let a poor, presumptuous devil keep the secret of his passion in peace—such peace as he can get. No, once you scent the trail of a man's hopeless, impertinent aspiring, you never rest till he has played the fool and been properly rebuked for disclosing that which he begged only to hide. Why couldn't you let me go on just loving you, hungering for you, but without——"

Her cue came then.

"Because—because—oh, wait!" she stammered, all a-blush with delight.

Her face was still turned toward him, still glowing with pleasure, though she was already out upon the stage. She stumbled a bit over her lines at first, and, despite the emotion that clouded Shaw's brain and thumped at his heart,

he was conscious for a moment of a keen sense of disappointment in her. But she rallied. In a moment she was the original *Suzanne*—gay, girlish, with a head full of schemes and a heart that beat to betray them; ingenious but ingenuous, a victor at the end, yet vanquished—his *Suzanne*, his own, at once the child of his brain and the foster-mother of that child; his own *Suzanne*!

She came whirling off at the end in a storm of applause. "Say there's no such thing as an American ingénue!" she gasped triumphantly.

"Flora," he cried, grasping her arm, "'we're dreaming; do not seem to breathe too deeply lest——'"

"I know—I know." She was speaking with soft rapidity. "I dreamed, too—apart from you. I dreamed that all I needed to make me happy was success and peace with my people. But over there at Aunt Eunice's I measured every man I saw against one in New York; they were all empty, idle, insincere. And here"—she nodded out toward the applauding house—"tonight it all seemed ashes—while you kept away from me."

But she had to go out again in front then, and bow and bow, and flash her merry, glowing face all a-smile with tremulous happiness upon an audience that felt the sympathetic contagion of the delight that possessed her.

"I didn't think," she said, putting out her hands to Shaw, when the curtain was still at last, "that I could explain about that—lunch engagement to any one. But there's one man on earth I can tell it to."

He bent over her. "Oh, to be the one man on earth!" he whispered. "But what I don't understand, your sweet Snobship, is why you don't look down on plain Oliver Shaw."

"Oh, that's simple," she crowed. "He keeps me too busy looking up."

"Won't you peril it all—all that fine society flavor, Miss Chrétien?" he demanded. "What will Mrs. Cortelyou say to your marrying me?"

"Mrs. Cortelyou—why, it is—it is my Missis! Come, listen to what she says—I dare you!"

She broke from him and ran to Mrs. Cortelyou, who, escorted by Isadore Braun in a state of half-incredulous, wholly rapturous solemnity, was coming toward them.

"Flora, my dear. I couldn't wait to tell you." The old lady patted her hand proudly. "You—you are a charming actress, my girl."

"Oh!" Miss Chrétien hugged the old lady delightedly. "Aunt Eunice, forgive me, but I must be quick. The whole of the next act is mine, and I must change my dress. So, first—Aunt Eunice, I have selected a—chaperon. Or, rather, he's just selected me. Missis, my dear, dear Missis," she half-sobbed, hiding her face on the old lady's shoulder, "say something nice to Oliver Wesson Shaw, the only man in the world!"

"Flora—Flora!" gasped Mrs. Cortelyou in dismay. "I'm——"

But she caught Miss Chrétien's eye swimming in blissful tears.

"I'm delighted!" said Mrs. Cortelyou bravely. "He must be a nice boy to make you so happy. She's the dearest thing on earth to me—Oliver," she added tremulously, but putting her hand with a proprietary air on his arm, as Flora hurried away to her dressing-room, and Braun, a radiant master of ceremonies, held open the door that led to the box beyond. "Tell me—your middle name, Wesson—could that mean the Wessons of Richmond?"



# The SMUGGLED RING

*by Emerson Hough*



WHEN Chillonby bought the ring, he did not see the straight, sunburned young man who stood carelessly at the other end of the counter. In truth, he did not notice even the rather shocked expression of the eminently correct salesman in the eminently correct jeweler's store. Chillonby was still on his way home after his visit in England. The sea voyage had been something of a bore, and he had tried to forget it, employing certain means thereto which had now left him in fair condition to forget everything else. The young man down the counter looked at him with a twinkling eye, although he volunteered no remark.

Chillonby turned the ring over in his hand. It showed a fine, clean emerald, flanked with a pair of steel-blue diamonds. The price was a cool thousand, and it was worth it. The sight of it was enough to make a man's sweetheart refuse him for extravagance; or a man's wife chide him for recklessness; or a man's wife's cousin— Oh, well, what would Edith do about it, when it came to that? The light of the sky, the green of the trees, the sparkle of life, was in these gems.

"I ought to have—I think I will take it," said Chillonby suddenly.

"Very good, sir," said the eminently correct salesman. "And where shall we send it?"

"Send it? I like that!"

"Ah?" said the salesman.

"You see, I don't live here in Winnipeg. I'm an American, after a fashion; live in Montana, north of West-over Junction—ranch, you know, sheep. Awfully good thing, sheep, these days."

"Then you could not very well—" began the salesman.

"Pay duty? Have it held up at the line when I'm a thousand miles out? Not in the least," remarked Chillonby. "Take her with me, right in pocket; no one'll suspect she's there. When I get home, she's right there in my pocket. Suppose I'd pay duty to those American sharps? Here's a certified check. Chillonby's good for a lot more. Take it to the bank—inquire about me. I'll seddown."

This latter he did; and, having the faculty of carrying his liquor with untroubled face and upright spine whatever might be the condition of his mental apparatus, he attracted no further attention at the time. Even the straight young man down the counter did not seem to notice him.

"That will be all right about the duty," remarked Chillonby again, as finally he placed the little package in his pocket.

"Certainly, sir," said the eminently correct salesman, who led the choir of Grace Church. "We do this continually. Not the slightest trouble in the world about it. But I would not put the ring on my finger, sir. It's rather an attractive sort, and might excite attention. I suppose you travel soon?"

"Evening train west," said Chillonby.

"By St. Paul?"



Chillonby nodded. He had patriotically traveled as far as he could on British soil. Had he sailed to New York, he would have been obliged to call on Ellen's family, and there were reasons why he should not do that. If her relative Edith had been in New York, it might have been different, but Edith was out at the ranch with his wife while he was off, for the second time that year, in England. He had tired of the drudgery of ranch life; and Britons never would be slaves, as he now reasoned formally with himself. Of course, the sheep were an awfully good sort, coming in fast, making a lot of money these days; but then, confound it! sheep kept one at the ranch continually, bothering with something or other. How much better it would have been for everybody had he, Chillonby, gone in for sheep at home in London, or even in Ellen's home, New York City! Then a fellow could have his clubs and meet people of evenings and see things in town. A fellow could live then as he had when he first met the beautiful Ellen Burnell at Lady Hope's that night, when he had danced waltzes with her first and danced attendance on her afterward, wheedled, begged, promised, implored, and succeeded.

Oh, well, a fellow's wife grew old; of course, no fellow could foresee that in advance. Now, here was he, Chillonby, suddenly informed that there were only two lives left between him and the title. Something in being a younger son, after all. No place like old England, by and large. They'd take the money from the sheep and go back to old England, where no one knew his immediate past, and where everybody knew the remote past of his family. He'd take the money and go back with Ellen—although she was a bit faded by these beastly prairie winds. Or, he'd take Ellen's cousin, who was much younger and who was not known in England, and who had the same name and the same family past, and who looked as Ellen did when he first saw her and as Ellen ought to look today.

What could you expect of a fellow? asked Chillonby, with sudden pity for himself. Who could have told ten years ago that he, Chillonby, would presently be within two lives of the title, and one of them a baddish insurance risk?

It may be seen that there were many things upon this traveler's mind. He figured them out one by one in the order of their importance. The first thing was that he was thirsty again, in spite of all the care that he had exercised in prevention. The second was that the ring was in his pocket. The third was that he must get the evening train. So he wandered down the street to his hotel, walking straight and with dignity, to all appearance a well-born and well-dressed Englishman, not an uncommon sight upon these streets. In regard to some of these things, the straight young man who followed him knew better. He also knew, what no one else on the street did, that in Chillonby's pocket was an emerald and diamond ring worth two hundred sheep or fifty cows—or the glance of a woman's eye. All these things the straight young man knew expertly and valued properly.

"B. 'n' S.," said Chillonby briefly to the barkeeper at the hotel; and having refreshed himself, he hunted up the porter, paid his bill, and had out his luggage.

"Going south?" asked the clerk, and Chillonby nodded.

"Soo or C. P. R.?" asked the clerk again, and again Chillonby nodded, too dignified now to be particular. The clerk felt himself entitled to guess; so did the straight young man, whose carriage followed that of Chillonby.

There are certain states and conditions of the human mind when one railway-train much resembles another in general contour and coloring; and when the lettering "C. N. R." so much resembles that of "C. P. R." that the difference between the two is unworthy the notice of a gentleman. It was so with Chillonby. The difference between the two abbreviations chanced to mean a thousand miles or

so of space and several days of time; but had this been properly propounded to Chillonby he would have answered only that Britons never, never would be slaves. He felt superior to all minor matters.

An usher ran out, saluting and grasping his bag and stick. At the ticket-gate Chillonby pulled out a handful of papers, among them his annual pass on the C. P. R.; the directorate of that road knowing the Chillonby name very well. The present wearer of it had forgotten to buy his ticket for St. Paul. He was, however, perfectly sure that he was going somewhere; and as to the trifling difference between two evening trains, it was not subject for review. Besides, Britons never would be slaves.

It was part of the straight and rather wide-jawed young man's mental equipment that he could guess quickly and accurately betimes. Had the truth been known, he would otherwise scarcely have been present at this place and time. He guessed now about how long it would take Chillonby to become partially sober. He would then be near Medicine Hat, and so far west that it would be quite as easy to get into northwestern Montana by way of Calgary and Lethbridge as it would be to turn around and come back by way of Winnipeg. The young man counted also upon that tendency of human nature to continue in a wrong course, even by way of Robin Hood's barn, rather than ignobly to turn about and take the back trail. He was sure Chillonby would go on west and not come back east to correct his error. So this young man, having reasoned out the matter satisfactorily to himself, bought his ticket quite through to Calgary. He paid no attention to Chillonby after they had taken their seats in the train. Thus seated, he himself might have been noted to possess a smooth, brown face, a clean, strong chin, and eyes blue and careless, yet very keen. One would have picked him out for a soldier or sportsman, or at least a man who would take a risk now and then; and this might

not have been so very bad a classification, had his life history been known.

Chillonby, suddenly let down after some days of exhilaration, retired to the drawing-room of the sleeping-coach and had his meals brought in to him, not very large ones. Once Chillonby left his coat quite visible, thrown over the back of a seat; but this particular young man was in no wise a fool. He would not have seized that ring had full opportunity been given to him. He would have had no legal right to do so, and, moreover, it would not have suited his book, as Chillonby would have expressed it. He himself would have said that he did not play the game that way. Without doubt, this young man was American. His face was the sort one often sees among cow-ranches, not so often among the sheep-ranches.

Chillonby left the train at Calgary, at the edge of the Rockies, and without hesitation carried out the plan which had been for some time in his mind; which was to get another B. & S. as soon as possible. Just at what time he had become aware of the fact that he was on the wrong train and some hundreds of miles distant from the place where he ought to have been had not been apparent from any emotion visible upon Chillonby's immobile countenance. He consulted no one at Calgary excepting the porter and the cashier at the hotel, and during the evening once more took rail, this time on a far less sumptuous train and one bound for the south, toward the Montana line. Very casually dropped in upon the same train with him this same straight, sunburned young man, whose presence he had not previously noted. The latter now pushed his hat back on his forehead, so that a lock of yellow-brown, sunburned hair fell down. He seemed to be more at home and more at ease out here, where the complexion of the incoming throngs of land-seekers and ranch folk was almost as American as that of the country south of the line.

The young man knew that Chillonby would change cars at McLeod and

again at Lethbridge, and that he would have to pass the customs office at the little plains town of Sweet Grass, on the line. It would take him a day more to get down to the junction town on the main line east and west through Montana; he would lose a day at this point, and so come in at least three days late at his home town, Westover Junction. By that time, the buckboard would have gone back to the ranch. Having reasoned these details out to his own satisfaction, the young man settled down to comfortable travel. He even smiled in an amused fashion when Chillonby reviled the execrable hotel grub at Sweet Grass station, certainly as bad as mortal ever stomachached. He himself seemed more used to that sort of thing, and, indeed, more familiar with this country. As he wandered up and down the narrow platform, looking over the plains toward the distant Sweet Grass hills, it might have been guessed that he could tell where Whiskey Gap was, and where were many trails by which the rustlers and smugglers brought contraband across the international lines, one way or the other. At least, as to this matter of smuggling, he could have told you that Chillonby did not declare this valuable ring for customs, although it would have been worth one-fourth more in America than in Canada. He saw Chillonby open his heavy luggage and his hand-bag for inspection; heard Chillonby explain that he was in sheep over eastward, and was only going home.

Chillonby was not aware that the young man knew these things, and, indeed, the latter so effaced himself that although they two were traveling companions for the next two days, he never learned that fact. What the young man, of course, did not know was that out at Chillonby's ranch, fifty miles north of Westover Junction, across the hard, gray plains, there were two sweet women practically imprisoned. He did not in the least know what intentions Chillonby had in regard to this ring and these women, his own interest in the matter being of another sort.

## II.

It was night-time on the gray plains. The windows of the Chillonby ranch showed a half-dozen points of light, the only ones visible for twenty miles. The distant outlines of the mountains near the international line, many miles away, were soft and faint upon the horizon. The intervening coulées and plateaus blended into a gray-brown, as though some great brush had swept a sepia tint across the landscape to soften its harsh outlines. Within the house there was more of cheer. The building itself was wide, and well constructed of stone. Its windows were deep, and they held the miracle of blooming flowers. Pictures—good ones and modestly framed—hung upon the walls, whose gray-green burlap hangings offered balm to nerves strung high by the thin air and the continual winds of this high country of the American steppes. The furnishings of this house in this out-of-the-way corner of the world were luxurious. A piano waited with up-raised lid as though a musician had recently sat there. In the center of a room visible through an open door appeared a waxed mahogany dining-table, its top, set with white serviettes and choice glass and silver, shining from the glow of a low lamp. There was taste, refinement, character, out here on the plains, where the hard, uncompromising life was fit only for rude men. "Jew" Bowers, Pete Hanson, Bradwell from Helena, and Shilling, the South Dakota man—these were the neighbors, and not one of them but scoffed at the English rancher, although not one but wondered at and worshiped both the rancher's American wife and her cousin, Edith Burnell. These two were accepted as the only possible sanction for a ménage held in that country to be as effeminate as it was unseemly.

Loyalty to the traditions of her own family had kept Ellen Chillonby faithful to her English husband. He and she were both young when they had first come from England after their hasty marriage. She had agreed with

him in his wish to go out to the "colonies"; although smiling to see him, as is the manner of so many Englishmen, regard the United States as only an erring and misguided colony, bound to yield deference to British customs and respect to British men. It was the Saxon in Chillonby which carried him to the West, as it had carried Ellen's grandfather and his father in earlier centuries; but it was also the Saxon in Chillonby that was savage enough to forget that his wife Ellen represented generations of culture and ease, subsequent to frontier days. He was a barbarian, though he did not so deem himself, since he himself remained free to move about, to visit the cities, to go back to the little island across the seas—which latter things Ellen cared less and less to do after the late reverses in her own family's fortunes. She, born to different if not to better things, dropped more and more into the accepted place of a rancher's wife on the frontier. She submitted to her fate with little outspoken murmur. The things that a woman says to her pillow at night are things regarding which we men need not concern ourselves; because we men are arbiters, very much akin to the immortal gods; and the immortal gods ever arrange matters to suit themselves.

Chillonby, having for two days refrained from drink, which abstinence made him shaky, and having for ten minutes had a drink, which indulgence made him steady, sat now in his own home gently explaining, telling of matters abroad, mentioning the price that sheep were bringing all over the range, telling his wife how they could clean up a cold hundred thousand now if they liked. Ellen listened, her eyes lightening. Was there a possibility, after all, that this present life would ever end for her? This desert—she was starving here. She wished that her husband would go so far as to propose definite plans, which with all her heart and soul she might ratify.

As for himself, Chillonby was hoping Ellen would go to bed. He had not taken a drop more than he needed to

steady himself. He could hear in the next room the occasional step of Edith Burnell, as beautiful a girl as ever maddened a savage Saxon's heart. He was hoping that after a time Edith would come to the room; perhaps play for him, or sing in that wonderful contralto voice which made the cords along his spine tremble in some way he could not understand. She was beautiful, was Edith; she had charm, presence. Chillonby did not reflect that so had Ellen, or once had had. It is the pleasure of the immortal gods to demand that youth shall ever remain youth. Failing this, the immortal gods at times exchange what once was youth for what now is youth. That is to say, they do so when they may, when they are able, when they dare.

Chillonby, one of the immortal gods, was wondering if he dared. There were only two lives between him and the family title. He had been utterly mistaken about the charm and freedom, about the irresponsibility and delightfulness of this ranch life. He wanted to go back home to England. If only Ellen— Why, he would do the decent thing by Ellen. Then he and Edith would go to the coast, west, and around the world. They would see the Himalayas as he had seen them when he was young—Australia, India, Japan, all the lotus islands of the earth as he had seen them. Then—of course, after having done the decent, the very decent, thing by Ellen—they would go back to old England, which, of course, was the only real place of all the earth. There, with the title and the castle and the income— What could he not do with a wife like this? Because, he decided as he once more refreshed himself, he fully intended to do more than the decent thing by Ellen, much more, very much more. God! The voice of this girl in there would madden him yet. He had long since ceased to understand a word his wife was saying. She at length, smiling bitterly, arose and excused herself.

The girl in the other room moved softly about, singing a note now and then, broken haphazard, as though the

air ran under-brain, as a subterranean stream now and then appears, bright and sparkling. Chillonby called as loud as he dared. "Edith!" he whispered, "Edith!" But if she heard him she made no sign. He was afraid to walk to her door lest he should be heard and suspected, for he knew his wife's quickness of wit. She herself was above suspicion, but not above his suspicion of her suspiciousness. So he sat for a time and waited uncertainly, half-dreaming in this luxury of his desire.

He heard the baying of the wolf-hounds outside, but thought it was only some coyote that had disturbed them. He could not have seen the dusty rider who came out of the shadows of a coulée and threw his rein over his horse's head in the dooryard. For a time he could not have heard the silent footfalls of this visitor, for, in fact, he did not hear the first rap the stranger gave at the door when he stepped upon the gallery. He was not in the least aware that the stranger had taken a long survey through this window as well as through other rooms, before knocking; that, in fact, he had made sure that Chillonby was quite alone.

"Come in," said Chillonby carelessly. There was no answer, and he arose and stepped to the door. This was precisely what his visitor wanted him to do. Chillonby gazed out into the dim night; but while the hall-light blinded him, it shone plainly enough upon the blue point of a long revolver-barrel.

"Keep quiet!" whispered a low, even voice. "Don't move!"

Chillonby was wise enough to see his cue. Although not personally a coward, he dared not protest by voice or act.

"Shut that door," whispered the visitor, following him with the silver sight as he moved across and pulled shut the door of Edith's room. The latter, within the room, supposed that some visitor had come on business. She ceased her song and presently departed through another door to look up her cousin, who supposed the same thing

when informed of conversation in the front room.

"Now, sit down over there, Mr. Chillonby," suggested the visitor quietly and in a very matter-of-fact manner. Chillonby, looking for some chance to escape, moved over to the side of the tabouret and took the seat pointed out, where the light would fall full upon him. He turned and gazed at his strange guest when the latter entered the room. He saw a tallish, slender, straight young man, with a smooth, brown face and rather wide chin, and eyes blue and keen. He was clad in the full uniform of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, as, of course, Chillonby recognized at once.

"Ah! you are down on some business, my man?" he said. "But why take this sort of liberty with me? I can tell you that won't do here."

"Why?" asked the young man gently, laying the heavy revolver upon the table-top in such a way that it perfectly covered Chillonby's breast as he sat.

"Because I am an Englishman myself, as you are, I suppose, or ought to be, from your uniform. Let me tell you, that uniform has no legal authority here, whatever it has above the line. But I suppose you've made some mistake. What is it? More cattle run through the Whisky Gap by rustlers?"

The young man spoke nothing in reply, but merely gazed at him calmly. "There is nothing you have done yourself?" asked he at length; "no smuggling?"

"Why, certainly not! I am an Englishman, and a respectable citizen."

"Those two things shall not be held against you," said the young man, smiling. "But if I were you, I would not jump at the conclusion that I am personally afraid of Great Britain and her naval power. So far as you yourself are concerned, they would make little difference to you if you were dead"—Chillonby started—"and that is what you will be in a half-second if you make a move to get away or do the first bit of loud talking. Keep still, now. I have come all the way from

Winnipeg to see you. If either of those two women comes to a door, just step there first and tell her you are busy; and do not start through the door, because if you do so I will hit you three times in the back before you have time to drop."

"By Jove!" said Chillonby, gasping.

The other smiled. "So your conscience is very clear, is it, Mr. Chillonby?" he resumed. "You might ask me to take a nip, you know," and he motioned toward the decanter on the tabouret.

"Certainly," and Chillonby pushed the decanter toward him.

"Thank you, I never drink," said the young man. "I was only reminding you of the duties of a gentleman in this country; although I believe you never have been naturalized here."

"If you have business with me, make it known at once!" said Chillonby hotly.

"Very well," said his visitor, "since you have put it so, I will oblige you. I will ask you, Mr. Chillonby, for the case from your right-hand coat pocket, the one in green velvet, with two rubber bands about it, over the tissue-paper. In short, I want the emerald and diamond ring you bought at Winnipeg five days ago, and which you smuggled through the customs office at Sweet Grass."

"You! Why, you—— Why, what on earth——" began Chillonby.

"I just want to look at it. I am curious about emeralds. That is my birthstone. That is a fine specimen you have in your pocket, Mr. Chillonby, a perfect emerald, and a flawless emerald is as hard to get as a flawless woman; and that is difficult, Mr. Chillonby, eh?"

In spite of himself, the rancher was fumbling in his pocket, and presently fished out the case and placed it on the table.

"Unwrap it," said his visitor. "Do you think I can do that with one hand?" His right hand was two feet away from the revolver-butt, but Chillonby understood, and gave over his own swiftly formed intention. The gems blazed

when Chillonby placed the ring upon the table.

"That's it, without question," said the young constable, "and it's a beauty. It ought to make any woman's heart glad."

"What's that to you, my man?" asked Chillonby suddenly. "What business is it of a Canadian officer whether or not I pay American duty on an English-bought article?"

The constable took up the ring and slowly turned it on his left index finger; but even then the revolver was in his right hand, and Chillonby knew by instinct that here was one of those accursed Western men that shot without aim and hit things they shot at.

"Where do I come in?" smiled the red-coated young man, pushing back upon his head the stiff-brimmed white hat, so that the leather head-string rested lightly on his sunburned hair. "That is a strange question for a man to ask who lives within one hundred miles of Whisky Gap, and who has just asked me if I am after rustlers. I am after rustlers all the time, whether they rustle cows or rings."

"But you are Canadian?" insisted Chillonby.

"Sometimes," said the redcoat; "but this trade of rustling has become such a science since this fellow Cory came in from the East, that we peace officers on both sides of the border have banded together. We help each other. My uniform is as good a passport as I like among the cattlemen both sides of the line. Sometimes I take a trail on this side and go north, and sometimes Carson and his deputies take a trail north of the line and follow it down here into their own country. We are each other's agents. We don't care much for extradition, for it's too slow. We simply give each other a leg-up as chance offers."

Chillonby grunted.

"Could you yourself tell the international line, of a bright night, Mr. Chillonby?" resumed the redcoat, smiling. "Hardly. We are here, then, to wipe out this Cory gang and get Cory himself when we can, line or no



line, British law or not. We don't have time to consult the secretary of war of the United States or the home office of England. Do I make myself plain? Should you refuse my perfectly fair request, as one of Carson's deputies—should you refuse to let me look over that ring and either collect the duty on it or confiscate it—why, Mr. Chillonby, I am forced to be brutally frank, but I must say that the plains would keep their secrets. If you are perfectly gentle and decent, I would not even like to take you along in irons and hand you over to Carson, day after tomorrow, at Sweet Grass. I am here, as I want you to understand, to do one of several things; to collect this duty or confiscate the ring, or turn you over with the ring; or else—” He shrugged his shoulders gently. “I know you are too much of an Englishman,” he said, “to offer resistance to an officer. You respect the law too much for that.”

“Then you'd—”

“Kill you as quick as you made a break to start any trouble.”

“It is not a question of trouble,” said Chillonby. “I have no right to pay any duty to you, for I don't know you. The whole thing is preposterous, absurd.”

“Not so very,” said the young man, smiling. “In short, you are going to do very much what I tell you to do.”

“The police have no right to bully,” raged Chillonby. “They can arrest without warrant, if they have seen a crime. But you have seen no crime. You have no warrant, and you have no jurisdiction here.”

“No,” smiled the red-coated young man, and he raised the heavy gun so square to the level of Chillonby's face and held it there so unflinchingly, backed by so narrow and so fierce an eye, that Chillonby shrank down into his seat, gone jelly-fish all at once.

“By Jove!” he muttered, “you have killed men, I do believe.”

“Never, unless I had to,” said his visitor. “Never, unless they wanted it or deserved it, or had to have it. Now, what do you want to do? You have

kept me here waiting longer than I like. My time is worth more than the duty.”

“How much is the duty?” asked Chillonby weakly.

“One thousand dollars.”

“That is as much as I gave for the ring.”

“The merchants were fools not to know a perfect emerald. At least, that is what the duty costs you here and now, Mr. Chillonby. On the whole, I am not sure that I want you to pay it.”

“I have not half that money in the house,” said Chillonby.

“Then I will take the ring, if you please,” said the red-coated young man, and pushed it as far upon his finger as he could.

“Nothing of the sort,” interrupted Chillonby. “I will send the receipted bill of the Winnipeg firm up to the customs office and ask them for an appraisal and a bill. Then I will send my check for the duty.”

The young man smiled. “Carson and I don't always find a check convenient,” he said. “We cannot cash it very well—there is nothing in the way of finance at Sweet Grass, as you know. The check may be protested, or payment on it may be stopped, in which case I would have to come back here again. No, Mr. Chillonby, I am afraid I will have to take the ring with me if you cannot raise the thousand.”

“But what surety would I have?” asked Chillonby.

“At least all you deserve. Most rustlers don't ask surety; they take a chance.”

“Well, I am d—d!” said Chillonby. “Of all the cold cheek! In his majesty's uniform, too!”

The young man upon the other side of the table dropped a slender, brown hand upon the revolver-butt in that strange familiarity, as easily to be recognized when seen as is the whirl of the rattlesnake when heard.

“Oh, I mean no offense,” hurriedly added Chillonby; “but you must admit this thing is rather unexpected and disturbing.”

"If you have any doubts about me, Mr. Chillonby," replied the young man, "you can ride over to the line and wire Sweet Grass Customs to-morrow. I myself can't go back that way. I am after Cory—he is in here again, worse than ever. Somebody's liable to be killed this trip. I wish you would offer me a cigarette."

"For you to refuse?"

"No, for me to smoke this time. Please light it for me. I can't very well do so with one hand. Thank you very much. Now, tell me, Mr. Chillonby, who'd you get this ring for, and why have you kept it in your pocket all this time? It was not for your wife, was it, Mr. Chillonby?"

Chillonby jumped, as though some uncanny prescience had read his soul. He only replied: "How did you know it was in my pocket?"

"I didn't. How could I? But it was. You see, we of the police have to take chances now and then, of one sort or another. I simply took a chance that you had not turned over that ring yet. A fellow doesn't always get home on the exact date of his wife's birthday, and it isn't quite Christmas yet. A fellow doesn't always leave a ring like this lying around on a sheep-ranch; and he doesn't always happen home exactly on—well, say, a wedding anniversary. But, tell me, who is she?"

Chillonby reddened. "By Gad!" said he, "I'd like to have an even chance at you for half a minute!"

The imperturbable brown face across the table only smiled at him gently. "I'd have been a fool," said the young man, "if I hadn't looked into every window of this place before I stepped on the gallery floor. No, I am not a Peeping Tom nor an eavesdropper. If the blinds had been pulled in the least I should not have looked—into that room there, at least."

Chillonby flushed red now with double anger, whose cause he did not know. This was jealousy, although he was not aware of it. Jealousy of his wife's cousin, and in regard to a man whom she had never known, had never

seen, and of whose existence she was not aware!

"By the Lord!" said the strange visitor, whistling. "You have not been married long? But, then, that is not your wife. If it were, you could not have kept that ring from her ten minutes—not any more than you could get out of here without my killing you if you make that sort of break again."

He motioned Chillonby to sit down.

"She's a very beautiful girl," said the young man, pushing his white hat still farther back from his face. Chillonby was rejoiced that Edith had never seen this young man, his face was so handsome, so reckless, manly, and, yes, attractive.

"She is a beautiful girl, and as good as she is beautiful," said the young officer. "We do not see many women out here. I saw a few before I came out here. And this one—your cousin?—your sister?—your wife's sister?—her cousin? Ah, yes, that explains it! That explains each and every conflicting phenomenon, as my old professor in college used to say; and, therefore, it must be the correct theory in this case. I beg your pardon, my friend, but you see we Northwest police are obliged to learn a trifle of logic; in short, to have as wide a general education as possible. We never can tell just what sort of a criminal we have got to handle—as in your own case. Because, Mr. Chillonby, unless I am guessing awfully wrong, you are a criminal, and a rather dirty sort, at that."

"Now, I will explain to you— Oh, d—n you, sit still, and give me another cigarette! Light it, too. I tell you there's no use your cutting up rusty here. Listen to me."

"You have got that ring for some one else than your wife. You were drunk when you got it, for I saw you buy it. A man gets things for the woman he loves when he is drunk. It is easy enough to read things as plain as this when you are as old at it as I, so don't be surprised. I know that you didn't get that ring for your wife and did get it for that girl, and that

you have no right on earth to give it to her. That is the situation right now and here under this roof. Bah! they talk about life in the old towns and all that. I can't see that you need any stage or any literature out here; here's a situation good enough of itself right out here, in the middle of hell."

Chillonby's face was gray. Excitement had burned out the alcohol in his brain. He was shaking. He knew himself to be absolutely in the power of this keen young man; under some sort of spell as well, one which lay deeper than the mere uniform of a frontier officer.

"Why don't you tell me all about it, friend?" asked the young man quietly. "I may be able to do you some good. I have not seen a play for five years—I don't often go to them. I haven't read a book; I haven't seen—My God! I haven't seen a woman for years. Now, seeing just one— Well, seeing this one has torn me up. We men along the border are rough sometimes if you rub us the wrong way; so don't rub me the wrong way, the way I am feeling just now. I never saw a face—I say, I never saw a face that set me going like that. It's true I am only a border rider, and I have no right, apparently, at least, to know what a woman like that is or what such a woman means. But most of life, Mr. Chillonby, is in wanting things that we can't have, eh?"

Chillonby groaned.

"Ah! and you want her, too, very much, eh? I don't blame you. But you can't have her."

Chillonby sneered. "I presume you aspire?"

"You d—d cad!" said the red-coated stranger. "No, I don't aspire. That is the difference between you and me. I don't aspire. I can look at a clean star on a night and say I love it, and say, too, that it is God's, and not mine. So far as you are concerned, that girl is God's, and not yours, and not mine."

"Now, I told you I came here in the interest of justice," he resumed, laying down his cigarette. "I am go-

ing to show you where you belong, where you 'stack up,' in regard to laws that you know ought to be observed.

"In the first place, you can't have that ring. It belongs to the law, to the stars, we'll say. You can't give it to your wife and be a gentleman, and you can't give it to her cousin and be a gentleman. It does not stand to reason that a man in my business will live very long out here. Now, if I have time—and if I am ever man enough to think I deserve that much—I will build a little pile of stones and I will put this ring under it and I will leave it there. The Indians say they give this or that thing to the sun. I will give this ring to the stars—because it cannot be given in decency to that girl in there.

"Oh, pardon me, but we men out here have to live and love and forget and act and die fast, very fast sometimes. I am just talking this way with you because I know now you have worn out the life of one good girl—she was a sweet girl or she could not have been the relative of this other—and now you want to wear out one more. Mr. Chillonby, I admit to you that sometimes I feel like taking human life. I do right now. You dispose me to that, because I see in you a not-infrequent type. You are a bullyragger, a blusterer, a master only in your own mind. The best education a man of that kind can have—the best way for him to get a line on his real self—is to meet some one who is his master and have to admit it; as you have to admit it right now.

"Now, listen to me, Mr. Chillonby. What was in your heart must stay there. If you ever raise word or hand or eye to that girl in there I will know it somehow, and I will come back here and settle with you. Man, don't you know that you can't break the law? Always, always we—I mean anybody, you know—who breaks the law is caught and punished and ended. See, you broke a little law about smuggling. Weren't you detected? You broke another law. Weren't you detected? Here's the proof, here on my finger.

Is it out of reason to suppose that I'd know it some way if you went on breaking laws?"

The young man seemed a dozen years older now, as his frowning face looked across the table. "Listen," he went on. "You are not fit to live west of the Missouri River. You are not fit to raise skunks, much less sheep. Here you are with money all earned for you, all you want on earth. You don't have to wonder how your wife and family are going to get the next meal—that is the real hell on earth. No man can be happy when he's rich; it's only when he is independent; and you are independent. You are married to a beautiful, cultured woman, a good woman—I know that as though I had seen her. Look back. Can't you see her when she was young, with white veil, orange-blossoms, and—good God! man—the bride's look on her face? That's right; cover up your own face, old fellow!

"But now you have got all this, and the law's not for you to fear, except in this little detail here. You can lie down in peace under your own roof in safety. For us who sleep on the ground out there, life is not quite so safe. What madness is it that makes you, who have got all these things, want to rip the roof off your own home, to pollute it, ruin it, to degrade yourself and some one else? The man who would do that— But, then, you are not going to do that."

Chillonby sank down in his chair, too strong a man to weep, yet not too strong to show a genuine emotion. His head, trembling against his gripped hands, told the story.

"I am ashamed of you," went on the accusing voice, "ashamed of you who live here west of the river; but I am prescribing for you. If you don't take the medicine, you will run against the highest kind of law you ever saw!

"Now, you go back to the wife that loves you and whom you ought to love as you once did. Don't lie to her; that's no good. But a woman will get along with a lot of things—she is self-adjudging, somehow; or, God knows, she'd

die. As to the other girl, I saw her once myself. She is too good for you or me. Forget that part of it. If you ever do what was in your heart to-night or last week, when you bought this ring, I tell you the law will settle with you!"

Chillonby heard a light step on the floor and the soft closing of the door that led to the open air. "Who was it?" whispered his wife presently.

"A Northwest policeman," said Chillonby. "I don't know his name. They are after Cory again, it seems."

"Cory? Ah, that is why you look so pale!"

"We have had a narrow squeak," said Chillonby.

"But we are going to be all right now?" she asked, her eyes wide.

"Yes, we are going to be all right now, old girl," said Chillonby slowly.

### III.

They did not get Cory, the noted cattle-lifter and outlaw, for nearly twelve months after that. Then that daring youth, as despatches from many Western points indicated, appeared from some mysterious hiding-place and started south across the border from the lower Saskatchewan, only to be discovered and at last run down. Cory's biography, widely printed at the time, showed him to be a college man, a son of good American parents possessed of considerable means, in the State of New York. How and why he had come to run wild, and so work himself into the leadership of one of the most reckless and daring bands of rustlers and smugglers the Northwest ever knew, was something never explained to the full satisfaction of the curious, least of all by those who knew his strange personality in its bloodier and more reckless moods. He remained a puzzle to his men, who yet loved him as a brother and respected him as their superior in skill, daring, and contempt for the law.

The details of the long chase and final capture of this borderman were given at some length at the time. He

was pursued by a detachment of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police—whose uniform he was accused of having at times used as a disguise—for a hundred miles above the border; nor did they halt at the international line. His course held south into the rough country, which he knew so well, and it was here, somewhere in northern Montana, that he met his end. His horse stumbled in a badger-hole, fell, and broke a leg. Cory, giving the horse a merciful shot, ran up to a little knoll, where for a time he lay, not returning the fire of the men who now surrounded him.

Edith Burnell read the account to her brother-in-law and his wife from the paper that came over in the ranch buckboard from the post-office.

"When the officers finally reached the place they found the daring outlaw dead. His head was lying near a little pile of stones, which he had perhaps piled up as a breastwork. As one of the men kicked at this heap of stones, his eye was attracted by some shining object. He stooped over. Near the youthful, handsome face of the dead bandit was a magnificent ring—"

"Let me see that paper, Edith," cried Chillonby suddenly; but she pulled it away from him.

"—which flashed in the sun. It was a ring of much value, consisting of a superb emerald and a pair of valuable diamonds, without doubt once the property of one of his victims. Circumstances point out that this valuable jewel was once owned in the family of no less a person than the ranch king, James Chillonby, of Willow Creek Valley—"

"Why, that means us!" exclaimed

Edith Burnell, dropping the paper to her lap.

"Go on," urged her cousin. "Here, let me read!"

"Examination discovered an inscription in the gold band, which read—*Edith Burnell*. This name is that of a cousin of Mrs. James Chillonby. There is no doubt that Cory by some means got possession of this ring, and that family pride has thus far kept the Chillonbys from making known the loss."

"What do you think of that?" Ellen looked at Edith blankly. Chillonby next took his turn at reading:

"There is no next of kin discoverable of the outlaw, Jack Cory. The ring is being returned by the constabulary of the Canadian Government to its rightful owner."

"Its rightful owner!" cried Edith Burnell, flushing. "Why, it's all a mistake. I never had such a ring in my life—away out here on the plains, fancy! But I am the only Edith Burnell in a thousand miles, or anywhere else, so far as I know. Well, isn't life strange sometimes, Ellen?"

"He had no next of kin," mused Ellen; but Edith shuddered.

"A dead man's ring," she said. "No, it is only some strange coincidence, Ellen," she added, as though answering some thought of her own.

"Do you think they will bring it over here, Jim?" asked Ellen.

"Very likely," nodded Chillonby gravely.

"But Edith could not wear it?"

James Chillonby raised his head. "I am not so sure, old girl," said he.



# VISIONS OF AN OPTIMIST



BY  
MARGARET  
SUTTON  
BRISCOE



## III. VICARIOUS DOMESTICITY



YOU told the Optimist that he enjoyed too much vicarious domesticity," said King, laughing. "You have good courage, haven't you? What is your idea of vicarious domesticity, if you please? So that's your notion of it—" he went on when I had replied. "No, it's not mine; not exactly."

"If I had held what seems to be your idea of it, I probably shouldn't have mentioned the matter to him at all," I answered.

"Possibly not," said my husband. "It happens"—he volunteered casually—"that I have seen some vicarious domesticity which—" He broke off at this point, and rather obviously changed the conversation.

"Have you remembered that the Flutterbies' party is to-night?" he said.

"What has that to do with domesticity?" I asked.

"Precious little," he answered. "We must remember to go—that's all."

I do not like her. I have shilly-shallied with it as long as I need to. I put off deciding what I thought of her, and tried my best to feel neither one way nor the other. It was all nonsense; for at the bottom of things I knew I could not like Mrs. Flutterbie, and that I never had liked her. I know now precisely why I dislike her—I always

have known, even while I was pretending to myself that I didn't, perhaps, quite understand her. The trouble was I did understand her perfectly. Lalla-lalla-lalla her husband calls her; it's the name she is known by with all her intimates. I never so called, or miscalled, her; but that's her name with most people; for every stranger is a friend, and every friend a brother, to Lalla-lalla-lalla. She gained this name—it requires explanation—through a kind of yodle-call which she and the boys she grew up with used in signaling to each other—she has "grown up" with more boys than any other one woman I ever heard of. King happened to be one of them.

I realize now that hitherto my chief source of difficulty in dealing with Mrs. Flutterbie has been that King knew her before she was married—and before he was. If I had met Lalla-lalla-lalla with no such previous history to hamper me, I should simply have had nothing to do with her. She's not at all my kind of woman. But if there is one thing I dislike above another, it is the type of wife who does not know how to "get on," as it is called, with her husband's old friends, so I made up my mind to see only the very best side of Mrs. Flutterbie; though, if I had told myself the truth, I would have had to admit that I distrusted her from the first five minutes I ever talked with her. I fancy that before her marriage she was more or less like Sweetie Van



Rustle—only ever so much more so, and without that queer little streak of depth of nature, which Sweetie certainly has. Married to the right kind of man, it is on the cards that Sweetie may deepen and deepen. If she marries a Mr. Flutterbie, she'll be—not ever quite as bad as Mrs. Flutterbie, but of that same quality.

King says that Lalla-lalla-lalla never had any harm in her, she was always just a "larky, crazy kind of a girl, game for anything anybody proposed." In a moment of more detailed speech he also stated that she "was the only girl he'd ever kissed under water." He kissed her once, it appeared, when they were diving together, and she asked him to "do it again, because it felt so queer." I didn't ask if he indulged her. He seemed to take the incident as a proof of Lalla-lalla-lalla's inherent harmlessness. Nothing ever meant anything to her, he said, no more than that did. She was just a very pretty, excitable girl, with not a quiet bone in her body, bobbing about and having the time of her life, and never thinking at all, not of anything or anybody—not even of herself—very much.

That was King's theory of her.

It was the party at the Flutterbies' last night that brought me to a kind of a mental crisis as to the place Mrs. Flutterbie is to occupy with me from now on; more correctly speaking, the place she is *not* to occupy. And yet how very little happened there that can actually be repeated! Sometimes it seems to me as if most of the important things that come to us—not that Mrs. Flutterbie is in herself important—are, in a way, subconscious happenings.

The Optimist dined with us the night of the Flutterbie party, and, as a natural consequence, we—the Optimist, King, and I—went together to the Flutterbies. Almost as we entered the door of the drawing-room, Mr. Flutterbie darted out from his wife's side to meet us. He's a rather nice man; not very sensible, though he can say most amusing things at times, and is good company. He is always beauti-

fully dressed, and neat to a fault; and he wears nice little whiskers, such as you might expect a lady to wear—if she wore them. He was not in the least a person who could be expected to control or develop a Lalla-lalla-lalla, provided there are depths there to develop. He rushed up to King and to me and shook each of us by the hand effusively. He has always liked King—but then every one does—and I knew he had always liked the Optimist; still, I was not quite prepared for it when he clapped the latter on the shoulder and cried: "Why, why! You dear, old ruin! Where have you been keeping yourself? We haven't seen you—not for a whole twenty-four hours."

Is the Optimist a daily visitor at the Flutterbies'? That was news to me; but the Optimist looked so excessively silly under the onslaught, I felt the soft impeachment was admitted. Mrs. Flutterbie overheard the whole occurrence, what there was of it, and, as she turned to greet us, I saw her glance at her husband; one of those murderous, marital looks that mean nothing at all. They are perfectly congenial, and very fond of each other. But it was just here, and at that moment, that the whole little episode, if I can call it by so serious a name, started. It gathered volume from then on. The next incident was when, early in the evening, I asked Mrs. Flutterbie if I might telephone home to speak to my nurse, for I was a little anxious over one of the twins, who was coughing in that croupy kind of way, as children so love to, just as you are leaving the house for the evening.

Mrs. Flutterbie showed me the way to the telephone herself, in the most gracious fashion; and there, while she still stood beside me, I saw—it was impossible to help seeing it—one of those little tacked-up lists of the telephone numbers one constantly uses. The list was in Mrs. Flutterbie's printlike handwriting; and the last name on the list, added in pencil, was the Optimist's. And she saw that I saw it.

Up to that moment there had been nothing obvious to me but a rather un-

comfortable, indefinable something in the air; from then I began to understand what that something might be, and what it was that Mrs. Flutterbie was determined to do.

I read a charming story the other day of a dear old man who never had harmed any one in the world, but in the course of an analysis he was making of the motives of the villain of the story, he remarked calmly that he was able to understand him so well because—"me, I am that kind of a man myself."

Having writ down Mrs. Flutterbie as I have at the outset, it may seem extraordinary that I should be willing, as did the old man of the story, to admit that I so well understood what was in the mind of my hostess, because—"me, I am that kind of a woman myself." John Bunyan knew what I meant.

"There, but for the grace of God, goes John Bunyan," he said, on viewing an obvious son of Bacchus crossing the path. Given a little vivacity, with no particular sense of restraint, and some chance for practise, almost any woman might make up into a more or less successful understudy of Mrs. Flutterbie. There are dozens and dozens of cheap imitations of her type, but not so very many of the type itself. There is no temptation whatever to a woman of average intelligence to model on these cheaper followers; but I submit that there are few women, of that same average, who have not felt, at some period of their lives, the temptation to lay aside the sobering restrictions, the hampering conventions, and, with the gay-minded type itself, go, as light-heartedly, a-fishing. It has its own call that same going a-fishing—especially for those who have wit enough to be quite aware that it takes brains, and something more, to fish—as the real type fishes. There, but for one grace or another, any one of us might have gone, over the hills and far away, where freedom, of its kind, lies; where restraints are not, and where the very atmosphere of utter intoxicating thoughtlessness is in itself a temptation. The wander-lust is an instinct—natural

enough. With how many of us (as we look back we know it is so) it has been simply a question as to which had the deeper hold on us, this call of the wild or some saving grace—a grace of more sensitive choice, of taste, of influence, of a mere chance word, perhaps, that drew us back and sobered us.

But this is not Mrs. Flutterbie's party, where, through some common kinship of the mind, it was very soon clear to me (what was the animus provoking her!) that Mrs. Flutterbie had set her lance in rest, and was tilting against me in a duel, for which I had not yet received or accepted her challenge. She was determined—I saw this plainly—that the Optimist should that night pose as her devoted attendant.

As to the Optimist—that worried me not at all. He can choose to do whatever he pleases; and he is quite old enough to take care of himself, to get into scrapes, and get out of them; but when I suddenly became aware of Lalla-lalla-lalla's full intentions—namely, that the Optimist and *King*, my two escorts, should both pose as constantly hovering about her, then—

King!

For the first moment I was too astonished to quite believe it; the next moment—I never was so angry in my life.

To do them justice, King and the Optimist each acted throughout like the gentlemen they both are. A man is rather defenseless against his hostess, or any woman who selects to delight to publicly honor him; but now and again each of them would briefly extricate himself, and come wandering back to me to learn if I "wanted anything." It was not hard to see into what a vulgar little warfare this performance could quickly degenerate, and one perfectly obvious to every woman in the room—it is unlikely that the masculine element would have so quickly understood it.

Almost in spite of myself I found that it might most easily happen that I would be appearing to set up something like my little court at one end of the drawing-room, while Mrs. Flutterbie

presided, in opposition, over hers at the other end of the room. But if my hostess imagined for a moment that I would enter the lists against her, or accept her challenge in any sense, she was, as I then believed, never more mistaken in her life. As I look back on it now I am forced to admit, and I see the humor of the confession, that I did at once take up her challenge. The moment I clearly saw what she meant me to see, I lifted the gage, however unconsciously—only I chose my own weapons, which were not hers. Apparently to me, all that I did was to decide to go home. It is hard to construe a complete retreat into a going out to meet the enemy—yet that is often the quick road to victory. I forget the excuse I decided to make to Mrs. Flutterbie. I was not particularly interested in what she might think or say.

I beckoned to King; and to him I merely stated that I thought I wanted to leave. He was quite willing. The Optimist was standing near us at the moment; but I did not know that he overheard what was said. We were detained on our way to bid Mrs. Flutterbie good night—my husband and I—by Sweetie Van Rustle's dear, prosy old father, who had been discussing household drainage—I think it was—with me, and who then wished to finish some history, in which he had been interrupted, concerning his first wife's management of her refrigerator plumbing.

"My first wife," he said, "a most estimable lady——"

Fancy talking in that way of the wife of your bosom!

But he was not destined to end his story that night. Just then the Optimist came up to us again and spoke to me hurriedly, in a lowered voice.

"I'm sorry to interrupt you," he said, "but you have been called to the telephone by your nurse. She says the child's not ill at all, and there's no cause for you to be uneasy——"

I think it took me just two minutes to clear the stairs, to fall into my wraps, and be out into the street. There were no adieus made to Mrs. Flutterbie!

King was flying along to keep pace with me; and while we were rushing down the avenue there came behind us the pat, pat, pat of feet, and there was our Optimist, all out of breath, following us.

"What in the world is the matter?" he said. "Why are you tearing off like this? And from such a nice party, too! Didn't I tell you the nurse said the child was not ill at all; that you weren't to be uneasy? I thought it was very nice and considerate of her to telephone. She wanted you to enjoy the party with an easy mind; and there you two go, charging out of the house——"

I stood still under the light of the street-lamp, and looked at the Optimist—and then at King. King burst into a shout of laughter, and banged his fist into the Optimist's shoulder.

"Well," he said, "if you ever play me another trick like that——"

The Optimist muttered something about "desperate conditions calling for desperate remedies"; and then he turned to me.

"I'm going back now, to finish the evening," he said. "I guess that's rather wiser, eh?"

I made no reply whatever.

"Much wiser," said King. "Give my regards to her."

"Take them yourself," said the Optimist.

King and I walked on in silence.

"My dear," said my husband presently, "what was the matter this evening? What was all this about?"

Then I told him the whole history of the evening—what little there was to tell. I was ashamed as I tried to put it in words; it seemed such an uninteresting, cheap kind of a story; and so intangible, too, when one tried to make it into a history at all. It was a relief to me when King seemed to understand; there was no good reason that he should, not from what I told him.

"Yes," he said, "I see. You met it just the way I like to see you handle such things—turned it off easily—simply went home when you found it might annoy you."

"That was the way I felt," I said gratefully.

"Not every woman has the courage to be so simple—not in social matters," said King; and I could have embraced him, if it was on the street. In my heart I was saying—for too much spoken "praise to the face is open disgrace," I suppose—"not every woman has such a husband to go home with."

"Why do you suppose the Optimist was so anxious to prevent your saying good night to Mrs. Flutterbie?" asked King presently.

I told him of the Optimist's telephone number on Mrs. Flutterbie's list.

At this he laughed aloud. "So!" he said. "There's the whole cat out of the bag. When the Optimist knows Lalla-lalla-lalla as well as I know her—I rather think he's got his eyes open, though. He told me to-night that he began to believe Mrs. Flutterbie was the kind of woman whom a touch of raciness did not improve."

"King!" I cried. "What a horrid thing to say about any woman! He shouldn't—"

"Oh, I don't know about that," said King.

"There's one thing certain," I said. "If that's the kind of *vicarious domesticity* you were talking about this morning—it's not the sort that a bachelor—not one as really nice as the Optimist—should enjoy. If a woman like Mrs. Flutterbie should once get any real hold on him—he's so good-natured— He ought to settle down and marry. He really ought. I have a great mind to invite Patricia Golden to visit us. She is the sweetest woman—you know how dear she is. The Optimist always admired her. They were children together, yet he hasn't seen her for years. She would seem like quite a new story to him, with all the charms of an old one—don't you think so? And—"

"Subrikinque, Subrikinque, Subrikinque!" said King.

Then I knew that he and the Optimist had been laughing at me together and behind my back, for it was not I who had told King of the Optimist's nickname for me; it was certainly not I.

"I don't care," I cried, recovering my spirit. "He ought to be married, and I think I shall write to Patricia to-morrow."

"Subrikinque!" repeated King.

## IVY SONG AT CHRISTMASTIDE

I OWN myself in thrall  
 To yonder ivy clambering the wall.  
 How close it clings!  
 Not all the harsh imperilment of storm,—  
 Winter's white swarm  
 With its inevitable stings,—  
 Can baffle it, or dull its constant green;  
 Secure, serene,  
 It typifies for me  
 Perpetually  
 The fortitude of Faith;  
 No fleeting wraith  
 Fading if but the heavens darkle o'er,  
 But something concrete, stable, and secure  
 That shall endure,—  
 Aye, that shall endure forevermore  
 As doth His love who on that far off morn,  
 A babe new-born,  
 Lay in the Bethlehem manger-bed forlorn!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



# The STEP on the STAIR

By Mrs. Wilson  
Woodrow



NE climbed many steps to reach the apartment of Anita, with its two or three tiny chambers high up in a tower; but upon arriving there one was obsessed by the fancy that this particular season's tardy and difficult spring had, for the sake of Anita, abjured her penury, and burst into summer and flower in this one small space.

It was all white and pink, like an apple-blossom, with pink climbing roses on the walls and flowered pink-and-white chintz hangings; and here and there were bits of fragile china and rare old silver on claw-legged mahogany tables, while from dim canvases in tarnished gilt frames, smiled the sweet, dark eyes of haughty Southern beauties of a generation unused to life's struggles.

Anita, sweet and dark as they, with a face like an apple-blossom and in a gown pink as a rose, stood gazing from her window. Far below, the city stretched like a sordid and dusty panorama of jumbled buildings divided into checker-board squares by intersecting streets. Men and women, in black, art-like processions, crowded and jostled each other, and the echo of their footsteps, the strident whirl of trolley-cars and rattling vehicles all added to the tumult of that mighty and raucous voice, which rose night and day to Anita's ears. With a shrug, and, yes, a sigh, too, she turned away, and seated herself before a table covered with paint-brushes, colors, a litter of candle-shades and menu cards. But these she pushed aside, and, leaning her head in

her hands, scanned a letter on the table before her, while a gray kitten bit her ear and tangled its little claws unheeded in her cloudy hair. Suddenly she raised her head and listened intently to a step which creaked on the stair outside. Hastily crumpling the letter in her hand, she half-rose, her cheek flushing. "*Entrez!*" she called, in answer to a knock, and a man entered, middle-aged, grizzled, distinguished, with kind eyes and a stern mouth.

She stretched out a languid hand, the expectancy dying from her eyes. "Robert! You! Did you not get my note telling you not to come? I'm waiting for another visitor."

The words themselves might seem to express a rather chilling welcome, but Anita's most commonplace utterance was full of warmth and color, her voice was a caress, her accent of the far South.

Wareing's smile was indulgent. "Yes; but not for another hour or two. I came early to urge you to go out and get a bite or two of dinner with me."

"No," she shook her head. "What are you thinking of? Fluff and I have had our dinner." She held the kitten against her cheek.

"Something tossed up in a chafing-dish, I'll be bound." His tone was disgusted. "You ought to get out into the air. There is some heavy fragrance in this room that is enough to give you a headache."

"Heavy fragrance!" she repeated indignantly. "I reckon you mean the jasmine in that vase yonder. Why, it's home." There was a break in her voice, a mist of sudden tears in her eyes; then she hurried on with a plucky

effect of spontaneous gaiety: "You poor, benighted Northerner. You've never smelled Southern jasmine before, and your dull, uncultivated senses can't appreciate it. And don't dare to speak in that way of my chafing-dish. Haven't I made you goodies in it? Haven't I? Haven't I?"

He refused to be cajoled. "It's a horrible way to live," he grumbled. He had picked up one of the frail, dainty candle-shades and was turning it over absently in his hands; and now he cast it impatiently aside. "It accounts for that thin line in your cheek and the slenderness of your wrists," taking possession of them. "Just wait till we're married. There'll be no such picnicking then. Those cheeks will become round and plump. My chef is one of the best in the country—ought to be; he costs enough. You wait. You'll get fat as butter."

She winced a little. "Some people admire my—my ethereal appearance," she answered defensively, half-defiantly.

"Humph! Ethereal is one word, little girl. I'd call it badly nourished, underfed." He was smiling quizzically, but it was evident that he meant what he said.

"Oh, Robert, what horrid expressions!" she protested poutingly. "Ugh!" with a little shiver. "To change the subject, what do you think of my new frock?" With one of her quick transitions of mood, she caught up the gown on both sides and stood looking at him from under her dark lashes with a native and ineradicable coquetry.

Wareing gazed at her with amused and admiring eyes. "Pretty, but not half pretty enough."

"I suppose you scorn it because it's cheap." She flung up her head impatiently. "Of course it's cheap. Seventeen cents a yard. Dimity. But what more virtue to it if it cost seventeen dollars a yard?"

"You won't be that way long." He laughed in brief, rather grim, amusement. "You'll be like all the rest—just as ready to make the dollars fly."

"Do talk of something else to-night," turning from him with unmistakable petulance. "Food and clothes and money!"—contemptuously.

"They're not bad subjects to discuss," he answered coolly. "I've put in too many years of my life scheming for them to sneer at them now."

"But they are not everything," a wistful passion in her voice and on her small, pale face. "Oh, life, life! I've been thinking about it all day, and I'm—oh, Robert, I'll tell you the truth, I'm frightened to death."

"Frightened?" he exclaimed, serious in a moment. "Why, Anita, what is bothering you?"

"Just bugaboos, I suppose. Oh"—speaking with a quick impetuosity, her elbows on the table, her chin resting on the bridge of her clasped fingers—"I'm frightened, frightened, frightened. Why, Robert Wareing, I'm going to marry you to-morrow, and I—do—not—love—you—one—bit." She said the words slowly, tragically, with long pauses for added emphasis.

Wareing shot a quick, keen glance at her, and then his eyelids drooped over his eyes. His face, which for a moment had paled slightly, settled into the perfectly impassive and non-committal lines it wore when conducting an important business deal. "May I smoke?" he asked, taking a cigar from his case. As he leaned forward to light it, his hair shone brown on the top, but gray, almost white, where it was brushed back from the temples.

"You're upset"—settling himself back in his chair. "Something has occurred to put you out of tune"—he cast a swift glance at the crumpled letter on the table—"and you're in one of those morbid moods when women want to confess all the things they've ever done and all the things they've never done. That's all"—reassuringly. "Well, go ahead, my dear."

"That's just it"—her face clouding—"if there only were something to confess! Something that had reached one's soul and become a part of it; something that, if it left regret and pain and even shame, left also a splendor of re-



membrane, a richness and depth of experience; and you could hold it to your heart forever; that is, if you had an unregenerate heart, like mine; and you could feel 'how mad and bad and sad it was—but, oh, how it was sweet!' There was a throbbing note of longing in her voice as she stood, with eyes up-raised, in a trance of regret for emotions she had never known.

When Wareing spoke it was with an obvious effort. "Anita, you've often told me that you were not sure that you loved me. It didn't bother me much, because I knew that you liked me, perhaps more than you thought; but I wish—if you can—that you'd try to tell me just why you are marrying me, since you don't love me, and since I don't believe that you're actuated by the same reasons as some of the rest—the reasons that would actuate most of the women I've known."

"The reasons I'm marrying you"—there was a shade of bitterness in her glance and a deeper seriousness than he had ever seen there before—"I'm ashamed to tell them. They are all such shabby reasons. I believe I told you I'd marry you, Robert, because this last year I've been realizing that my hopes and ambitions will never amount to anything."

Her eyes were lowered, but he could see the unshed tears gleam through her lashes. "I've missed every mark I aimed at. Down there in the South I thought I was a very gifted and accomplished person. You know a little talent goes a long way among admiring friends and relatives; but it certainly does shrivel up and appear mighty small in the fierce, white light of the market-place. My!"—with a long sigh—"I came up from the old plantation so laughing, so confident, so dead sure that all I had to do was to hold out my apron, and all the beautiful and delightful things would tumble into it. But this great city surely has taught me a lesson, and she's no very gentle teacher, either. I tried lots of things; but I soon discovered that I was lucky if my little two-bit accomplishments would earn me the barest living; so I

took to painting candle-shades and menu cards"—giving them a contemptuous flip—"and I give dancing lessons two afternoons a week, and piano lessons one—to the children of rich friends. And—and," there was a sob in her voice, "I shall never do any better. I haven't got it, that indefinable something that means success."

He put his hand closely over hers, and softly patted her downbent head. "But you have other gifts that you haven't counted, Anita."

She looked up in surprise, and slowly shook her head. "No, I've told you every last one of them."

"Well, you haven't told me yet why you accepted me," he insisted gently. "There are plenty of young fellows about. Good Lord! I'm always running into them. They're so thick I almost walk on them."

"Oh!" she scoffed. "Those! Yes. Plenty of them. Ready to come and waste my time and stir up messes in my chafing-dish, and break my coffee-machine, and eat up at one gobble all the little stores I have on hand for two or three days; but if they saw me starving in the ash-bin, or freezing on a fire-escape, they'd only call an ambulance. They wouldn't offer me a home."

"Oh, it's for a home, then! You want a home! Doesn't this content you?"

"This?"—she glanced about her with an affectionate tolerance—"I know exactly how I'll look after about twenty years of this kind of life. I'll be one of those peaked, wistful-eyed old maids with rusty black clothes turning green and brown, and a general air of apology for living. I'll iron out the ribbons of my winter bonnet to trim my summer hat, and launder my own handkerchiefs and paste them on the window-panes to dry. And I'll have to send Fluff to the S. P. C. A. to be chloroformed. I won't be able to afford even a cat for companionship. It will eat too much."

Wareing threw back his head and laughed. "A pleasant picture for your young eyes to gaze upon. Don't you

think that what I offer is better than that?"

"Yes, oh, yes"—pulling Fluff's ears—"I've had enough hard knocks to realize what a fool I'd be not to marry you."

"But——" he said very gently, very encouragingly.

"But, Robert"—in a burst of confidence—"to marry a very rich man means so many deadly responsibilities. I'll have to be correctly upholstered and stiff with jewels, I suppose. And think of the stupid, overfed people I'll have to meet! And life always running on oiled wheels. Everything done in a stately, solemn, well-ordered fashion. Nothing joyous, haphazard, no ingenious makeshifts, no delirious ups and downs, no more gambling on the unexpected, no more gipsyings—just one dead, monotonous level of comfort and luxury."

He arched his eyebrows whimsically. "It does seem rather a solemn feast as you describe it."

"We shall never escape your perfectly trained servants," she mourned.

"Cheer up, Anita. You don't begin to give me and my money credit for what we can do. The servants ought easily to be disposed of, and we ought to be able to get up a very fair imitation of poverty. I've had an intimate acquaintance with the real thing."

"Oh"—starting impatiently to her feet—"do not make fun of me when I'm serious, when I'm telling you everything I have been thinking over through these weeks that we've been engaged. Robert"—her delicate face irradiated by an intense and flamelike emotion—"Robert, it's *life* that's tormenting me. At first when you asked me to marry you, I thought that wealth would give me what I had missed, that it would enable me to realize all my beautiful, sumptuous, opulent dreams. But, oh"—she threw her arms upon the table, scattering the menu cards and candle-shades unheeded upon the floor—"I've realized lately that money can't really give me anything. You don't know what it means to have things in your heart that you can't express—to

have beautiful things in your soul that vanish when you try to express them, so that you have to give piano and dancing lessons in order to live. You are just a business man. That's all you've ever cared for, that and success. And you've always won. You do not know what it's like to lose."

"Anita, how long have you felt this way?"—his voice was crisp, restrained.

"A long time; but more since—since—yes"—lifting her head and looking at him with honest eyes—"since I knew Eugene was coming. You never knew 'Gene, did you? We were boy and girl together down on the plantation; and we used to dream of the big, unknown world, and of how we were going out to conquer it. We almost loved each other—almost, Robert," with a quick change of tone. "Why do you, so staid and poised and terribly respectable, want to marry a—a—waif of the wind, like me?"

He stooped and kissed her fingers. Then, gathering both of her hands in one of his, he rested his cheek upon them a moment, his face hidden. "Because I love you," he murmured. "You mustn't have any misconceptions about that, dear. You mustn't doubt it. Perhaps I haven't shown it enough. The circumstances of my life have increased my natural and disagreeable reserve. You see, I wasn't born like you, with inherited traditions of wealth and ease. In childhood I had sordid, ugly surroundings. I've been used to struggle and hard work ever since I can remember. Well, what's the use of talking about it? You know I won out. I beat the game. For a good many years the zest of trying to do that was enough. It takes about all a man's time and thoughts; but behind it all was the longing that I had as a ragged, little boy, and the belief in something bright and beautiful that was some day coming to me. And you seemed the embodiment of it, Anita; a little, lovely, nestling girl, with dancing feet and roses in her hair."

"Oh!" she cried, rising and staring at him, a strange expression in her eyes, "that was what you wanted, too,

was it? The eternal romance that our hearts and souls long for, and that we're always trying to find. And you've been true to it. You've believed in it and followed it, and I've denied it"—with a dry little sob.

She gazed beyond him toward the window with almost vacant eyes. "Look!" she exclaimed, sweeping over to it and snatching the curtain aside—"look! See the dark creep up over the city! A little while ago I saw only commonplace, dusty streets, crowded with people, and heard only a crazy, creaking old piano-organ, grinding away below me; but now there are purple vistas and glittering lights and fairy towers. It's all mystery and magic. A nightingale wouldn't be out of place, would it? And somewhere out there is life, is romance."

Wareing gazed in silence over the city; at last he turned and looked down at her very earnestly.

"Anita," he said slowly, "you won't find the romance where you seek it, nor when." After a moment's hesitation: "Perhaps I've been slow in understanding some things. I've thought only of myself. Of the joy it would be to give you the toys and the baubles, and open your eyes to the wonders of the world; and I guess I've been all wrong. I think we'd better start again. I want you to feel that you are free, that you needn't marry me to-morrow or any other time, if you don't want to; but don't make any decision in a hurry. We sometimes follow false lights. Do you understand?"—taking her by the shoulders and looking deep into her eyes—"that you are free?"

"Free," she repeated dreamily, a little frown puckering her brows, "I do not know whether I want to be or not, and"—hastily—"I'm not thinking of the things you offer, Robert; I'm thinking of you."

There was a sudden flash in his eyes. "Then you haven't found me a terrible, prosy old bore?"

"Oh, no; we're very"—hesitating for a word—"we're very congenial. Listen!"—turning sharply from him—"what was that?"

They waited a moment in silence. "A step on the stair," he answered, the life gone out of his tones. "Good-by, my dear. I may stop in late this evening. You see, I may find it difficult to sleep, unless I know which way your happiness lies." He took up his hat and moved toward the door, but paused a moment with his hand on the latch. "You are free, you know, Anita." There was a break in his strong, almost harsh, voice.

"Free! Ah, yes," she answered mechanically; but she had scarcely heard him. Her eyes were fastened on the door; she listened to that quick, bounding step coming nearer and nearer. Her color had risen, and her breath came quickly through her parted lips.

Wareing smiled half-bitterly, half-indulgently, and passed through the door. A moment later there was an imperative knock, followed by a young fellow, lithe, dark, and slender, with clear-cut, high-bred features and gay, bold eyes.

"Anita, Rosita, Chiquita"—he caught her hands in his. "You wicked girl to go and nearly get married without asking my permission. Why, the minute I got your miserable little scrap of a letter telling me the news, I took the train. 'Oh, young Lochinvar has come out of the West!' Don't I look as if I had ridden long and hard? 'And now I am come with this lost love of mine, to tread but one measure, drink one cup of wine.'"

"Eugene!" Wareing was for the moment forgotten. She stood smiling at "Young Lochinvar," her cheeks as pink as her gown, her eyes sparkling. "You haven't forgotten to quote poetry, have you? Well, we'll have one of those old Spanish dances we used to do down on the plantation, and you shall drink a cup of wine, that is, if you stop glaring at me as if you'd never seen me before."

"I never have. You've got another dimple, and that makes you a new and lovelier Anita."

"Oh, Eugene!"

"Oh, Anita!"

The "do you remembers" and the

"have you forgottens," bubbled from their lips, punctuated by laughter, young, happy, joyous laughter. And when they had laughed until they cried and talked until they quarreled, Anita made a salad and cut sandwiches, while Eugene busied himself with the coffee-machine.

"Is the salad all right, or has my hand lost its cunning?" she asked anxiously.

"I should say it has gained in technique," he replied judiciously, "and the salad is as cool as your intellect, as sharp as your discernment, as bland as your sympathy, and as stimulating as your wit."

"Gene! How nice and Southern! And it sounds exactly like you, just like the old 'Gene.'"

He was rolling a cigarette with his long, slender, artist fingers, but he paused a moment, his eyes on hers, before he answered: "The old 'Gene' has never changed."

She flushed deeply under his eyes. "How—how are the pictures going, Eugene?"

"Oh, I'm beginning to sell them at last. The glassy eyes of the millionaires are turning toward me, and I've several commissions to make beautiful on canvas their pug-nosed, fat-faced wives. Those ladies hail me as a great psychological artist. Their mirrors have always been so cruel to them, that when my brushes flatter them, they say I paint their souls; strip away the husk of the flesh and reveal enduring loveliness. The work I'm doing is certainly pretty; but I'd hardly call it art." His eyes were full of a moody bitterness, and his sensitive, delicately cut mouth had fallen into lines of discontent.

"Ah, Anita," a real emotion in his voice, "think what life might have been to us if— But there, what's the use? We've had the 'one cup of wine,' let us have the 'measure' now. Dance, Anita, as you used to dance down on the plantation."

She snatched up a fan and slid away over the polished floor. "Play," she commanded, tossing him a banjo, which he caught deftly and strummed with

accustomed fingers, while she floated about the room like a thistle-down, and made sudden provocative pauses, with fan held high above her head, then swayed like a flower in the wind and took quick, running, little steps, and stamped her heels upon the floor and bent languorously backward. At last, with a final curtsy, she stopped, her hand on her heart, her face as pink as the roses on her walls.

Eugene sprang to his feet, with laughing eyes, bowed low, and flung his hat, with real Spanish courtesy, at her feet.

"Anita, Rosita, Chiquita, the dreams of my youth you recall."

The smile died from her face, her eyes grew wistful. "The dreams of our youth," she repeated, "I'm young yet; but they haunt me. They were beautiful dreams, down there on that old, gray river. Can't you shut your eyes, 'Gene, and see the terraces sloping down to the water; the lovely, neglected garden, with its tangle of roses and jasmine?"

"Do I remember?" His eyes looked deep into hers. "I swear I never smell jasmine without thinking of the old place and of you. Oh, Anita"—he caught her hands and drew her toward him—"think what life might be if it wasn't for our accursed poverty. If we'd only had just a little between us. 'Each life's unfulfilled, you see, and both hang patchy and scrappy.' If we'd only had the courage to face things hand in hand, we'd have gotten along somehow, and we surely would have sighed deep, laughed free, starved, feasted, despaired, been happy.' But we didn't have the courage, did we? We wouldn't believe in our dreams. That's the worst of life: she won't let you."

"'Gene," she whispered, her breath on his cheek, "suppose I told you that I'm almost ready to let everything else go, and just believe in the dreams and follow them! I'm—I'm free, 'Gene; I'm not going to be married to-morrow. Robert gave me my freedom to-night."

"Not really!" After a moment he dropped her hands. "Of course you

are joking; but, believe me, the dreams are lovely, ungrateful things. We can give them our hearts' devotion; but they make no return. We've got to build our houses on the rock of the substantial things, stodgy, bread-and-butter facts."

She had drawn away from him, and was now looking at him earnestly, her eyes as cool as his own.

"Then you think I wouldn't give up the material luxuries for the things I really believe in?"

"I do not, my dear little Anita, Rosita, Chiquita, nor would any woman. You are a dainty little jasmine flower, Anita, and a heavy, drenching rain would soon finish you."

The sudden glitter of anger in her eyes was quickly controlled. "But if I assured you that I meant it?"

"You might tell me so to-night; but as sure as to-morrow's dawn, I'd get a little note from you, saying that the morn had brought wisdom. Ah, Anita," his eyes softening with something like tears and a real passion in his voice, "had I been free, and you been true!"

"Free! Are you not free, Eugene?"

"Jove, no! Even as you have your millionaire, so I have my widow. She is a little older, a little grayer, a little stouter than I; but she is still charming, and always a very rich woman."

Anita's laughter—laughter with an edge on it—rang through the room.

"Eugene, now I see. You couldn't be true to anything, to the things you really believed in—to your dreams, to art, or to me. That was why you couldn't believe that I could be true."

"Of course I couldn't, star-eyed Anita," he returned cynically; "are you not a woman?"

She turned from him with a slow and haughty scorn, and walked to the window. There for a moment or hours, she never knew which, she stood, looking out into the night. At last, the silence in the room was broken by a faint, repeated sound. Anita turned about and listened.

"It is a step on the stair," said Eugene, as if in answer to an unspoken question.

"I know. He is coming. Eugene, look from the window a moment. Do you see the night; all the mystery and magic of it? I wanted to go out among its fairy towers, and purple shadows, and glittering lights in search of the real romance—but he told me that I'd never find it by going out to seek it. And I've been standing here all this time, Eugene, not thinking of you at all, but wondering what he meant. And when I heard his step on the stair, all at once I understood. It doesn't lie outside in vistas of mystery and beauty. It is deep in our hearts, the eternal romance, which is life, which is love. Good-by, Eugene."



## NOVEMBER

THE flower-burnt slopes are dull and ashen now,  
Where once the goldenrod made glorious flame;  
The folded hills wear mantles on their brow;  
And bowed as if beneath a weight of shame,  
In the long twilight of the silent day  
The wire-grass sighs and whispers Summer's name.

BETH SLATER WHITSON.



## *The* **BUCKSKIN SHIRT** *By Roy Norton*



EER pardner.

"This is my furst letter. I kno all about how you saved muther on the desert from the injuns, so she named me after you in grattitude. each time she says you send me something and call me little pardner. so i guess we are. i want to play injun but aint got no buckskin shirt like buflo bill wore. if you see Santy Klaus loafin around out there tell him. muther says he lives somewhere, near you. goodbye Willie Smith Parks.

"ps. ain't this a long letter."

The big, gaunt man read it with chucklings and interpolations of "God bless his little heart" or "Ain't he a brick, durn him; ain't he a brick!"

The half-written, half-printed missive was familiar to him through many readings, for it had been his evening custom now for several weeks to scan its pages before commencing the herculean task which he had set himself—the making of the shirt.

He relighted his pipe, carefully folded and religiously replaced the letter in his safety vault, a baking-powder can on a shelf. In this can, too, was his store of gold-dust, his only reward for months of isolation and toil.

With a sigh of touching profundity, he once more bent over a bundle of buckskin, which lay in crumpled folds beneath his clumsy, toil-worn hands. When he straightened up, after intense study of the lines on which miners'

shirts are made, its crude design became visible.

He was lank and huge. His skin was wrinkled by desert suns and winter winds. He was wholly unprepossessing until one came to look deeply into the eyes that at first glance were merely pieces of blue-gray steel, set into the dun color of his face. The more one looked the deeper they became. Then, if his face contorted itself into a mass of crisscrossed wrinkles, the eyes became wells of kindliness and gladness; and the man was beautiful. After that you forgot to look anywhere else.

His habitation was a mere shack of a cabin, perched on the edge of a bluff away off up in the tops of the Sierras, where winter snows lie deep, where the wind croons through fir-trees watching over splendid loneliness; and where the lean, gray wolf has come into his own again, after the passing of a civilization. It was a day's hard snow-shoeing in winter, and an equally long tramp in summer to the nearest neighbor.

A black hole in the hillside, deserted since those earlier argonauts had gone their ways, had lured him to the place with gleaming invitations. From its overlooked crannies he drove a meager "Stake."

It was late autumn now, and the snow had covered over that forgotten city in the cañon below; and blanketed in white the old camp cemetery. On this night and other nights the wind sang varying tunes, and drove the snow like spray against the cabin window from a sea of unbroken white.



But neither the night nor the hole in the hillside was of interest to the man in the cabin, who alternated little pieces of whistled tunes with half-whispered soliloquies; and occasionally, when the problem became very perplexing, thrust his fingers through his shock of hair, and swore great, meaningless oaths.

For seven years now the gaunt one had never failed in a Christmas remembrance, the only one he gave, and to a stranger's child. For seven years, luck with him or against him, he had sent this Christmas offering. Once, down in Tucson, he had been in such straits that he had to pawn his silver-mounted saddle to gain the wherewithal to buy a gewgaw for this little boy. But as he said at the time when he mailed it, he had "made good. And what's the use in havin' a little pardner named after you, if you don't give him his'n on Christmas?"

But this was the hardest year of all. The most difficult task. Not a squaw within a hundred miles. Indians all gone. Nobody much who knew how to tan buck. Ought to have beads on it, but that couldn't be done. Wished he had learned beadwork. Never cut nor sewed a boy's shirt in all his life. How big was a seven-year-old, anyhow! But "Sure as shootin'", there was a real Buffalo Bill shirt goin' back East this year."

So through this winter's evening and many others he worked steadily, and looked forward to that fast approaching time when he must venture out from the wilderness and away to the abode of men, in order that he might express with due formality his annual gift.

On the night of its completion as he held it to the light it proved a wonderful creation. Never was such a tan, and never did finer claws grace a neck-piece. Its thrums were of the thinnest, and a quill or two lent chic. True, the sewing was a trifle irregular in stitch, and there were places that looked rather crude, but it was "A mighty strong shirt, and them stitches was all put in thar to stay. You bet it was a strong shirt."

There came the night of the starting. Fresh thongs to the shoes, the homely lunch, and the packing of the precious bundle that was to bring gladness to those two Easterners. The buckskin shirt and the meager supply of gold-dust were rolled into a tight little wad and carefully bound around with strips of flour sack.

The wind was not wearied of the night when the moccasined feet were slipped into the rawhide thongs, the diminutive pack thrust over sinewy shoulders, and the belt tightened for the day's journey. Out through the singing pines, which bade him a friendly good-by, up to the crest of the divide where undergrowth and barren rock were rendered a plain by the leveling snow, he went, and the morning sun broke upon his traveling.

"Oh, Buffalo gals, ain't ye comin' out to-night,  
Ain't ye comin' out to-night,  
Ain't ye comin' out to-night,  
Oh, Buffalo gals, ain't ye comin' out to-night,  
To dance by the light of the moo-oon."

So sang the fiddles of midnight, as he reached Indian Spring, the stage terminus, stiff, tired, and sore. The opening of the pack, the expenditure of a portion of the hard-earned dust, and the participation in a dance where "ladies" were distinguished by bandanna handkerchiefs tied 'round muscular male left arms, came as a matter of course, and an exhilarating dissipation after all those weary days of toil and weary nights of effort in the hills.

"Sandy must hev somethin' mighty precious in that bundle of hissen," was the comment of the stage agent as he received a wad of buckskin with reiterated instructions to keep it safe-guarded.

But neither through the hours of night nor in the early dawn, when he mounted by preference the vacant seat by the stage-driver, did "Whistling Sandy" vouchsafe an explanation of the whys and wherefores of his burden. None but an observant eye could have detected when he bound his tiny "poke" of gold inside the little shirt, that in his estimation the latter was the more

precious. Nor could any one have observed that this solicitude was continued at Forest Hill, where the steaming horses and sleigh from Indian Spring gave place to fresh ponies and wheels.

Away off down the divide, through ever-decreasing snow and over wind-swept, rock-strewn spots, the stage clumsily rattled. Its inside passengers, consisting of a traveling man for an Eastern mining-machine house and a large, fat woman, who had been a cook at an upland mining-camp, bumped hither and yon as the vehicle found declivities.

Every now and then the driver, as he threw his lash out over the leaders, complained, in the whispering voice of the West, about the responsibilities that had been thrust upon him in this trip.

"Here comes a clean-up from the Golconda—twenty thousand, anyhow—and for the first time in a year they ain't no Wells-Fargo man along to watch the job. Last time this thing happened they stuck us up and poor old Tom Smith gits shot off'n the box for forgettin' to shove up his hands when a gent with a handkerchief tied over the lower half of his mug makes a gentle request."

Sandy involuntarily thrust his hand around the buckskin shirt, which, together with the scant store of wealth, reposed within the sagging folds of his blue flannel shirt.

Great heavens! He had never thought of this before. Suppose they should be held up on this trip? He wouldn't mind the loss of his poke or any other valuable possession of his own, but the shirt! Why, if the highwaymen got that, his "little pardner" 'way back East would wait disappointed on that fast-approaching Christmas day. "But, shucks! they wa'n't goin' to be no hold-up," and he lighted his pipe.

Even in the land of certainty the unusual happens. So it was that as they rounded the turn of dread Dead-Man's Curve, there came crisply out in the morning air the command "Halt and hands up! The brakes for yours!"

Sandy, for the instant bewildered,

caught a kaleidoscopic glance of two masked men on the hillside above the mountain-road, a menacing figure near the head of the leaders, a pointed rifle, and the driver's frantic efforts to pull up. Like a flash came the thought of his mission and the necessity for escape.

The whip lay before him. Without a thought of consequences and regardless of the recklessness of his action, he seized the whip, sprang to his feet in the box, and sent the long lash curling, quivering, and viciously snapping across the palpitant flanks of the maddened leaders. At the top of his voice he urged the horses into continued speed, swearing with only such oaths as come to the man of the frontier when meeting a crisis.

The driver, astonished, released his foot from the brake and thoughtlessly rose to a half-standing posture. A rifle on the hillside cracked with a spiteful suddenness, and in a huddled heap the driver dropped forward, liberating the reins from his hands. The terrified horses threw themselves into the traces, the coach gave a leap ahead, and, driverless and aimless on the mountain-shelf, the race was on.

Again a rifle sang from the hillside, and one of the wheel-horses dropped, stricken so suddenly by death that its body blocked the way, threw the other wheel-horse out of the road, and brought the stage to an abrupt standstill. Even as the wheels ceased turning, the rifle spoke again, carrying death to the other wheel-horse. The leaders, surging upon the tugs, broke loose from the blocking burden, and went clattering down the road to the echo of pursuing shots.

A gaunt man, rifle in hand, jumped cometlike from the seat beside the dead driver and sought protection and barricade behind the body of a fallen horse. A black barrel was thrust forth from his place of hiding, and instantly carried a messenger of death to the nearest outlaw.

The other two, surprised, balked, and angered, jumped to cover behind convenient boulders, and sent a volley to-

ward the battered old white hat which showed itself above the quivering loins of the dying wheeler. There came no shot in reply. Sandy was biding his time.

From within the coach came asthmatic screams from the erstwhile cook, and shouts of "Ve surrenders! Ve surrenders!" from her traveling companion. These cries finally subsided into snivelings and moans as the unfortunate travelers sought the security of the stage-coach floor.

Out on the snow of the roadside the body of the dying outlaw twitched convulsively. From Sandy's fortress, as he lay, it seemed fantastic. Even when that prone figure, with a last movement, twisted upon its back and rested quietly with an unheeding face turned upward to the morning sun, Sandy felt no pity. It was part of the game, and the game was one which must be played to a finish. He knew, as did the others, that there would be no compromise here. It was to the death.

As he watched with steely eyes aflame with battle-light, he counted his chances, but felt no weakening and no fear. Over and over again, between his clenched teeth, he muttered: "They can't win, damn 'em, they can't win. They got Jack, but they can't get me. If he'd been game from the jump we'd have all pulled through."

A sudden movement on the hillside caught his attention.

There was a swift rush of a black form silhouetted against the whiteness as one of the robbers, adopting new tactics, sought a vantage-point higher on the mountain, from which he might shoot down to the road. Quick as a flash and with deadly certainty, Sandy's rifle recognized the danger, gave answer, and another huddled heap was added to the morning's tragedy. Down the hill it came, tumbling grotesquely, displacing stones in its journey, and finding a resting-place within a few feet of its comrade.

Sandy chuckled grimly. "There's just one more," he said to himself, "and mebbe I kin get him to lay down his hand.

"Hey, there!" he shouted, "I don't wanten kill you, and I reckon you don't care in nowise particular about gettin' me. If you've got enough already, you kin chuck your guns over in front of that rock, h'ist your hands, and come down here where we can palaver."

A shot was the only reply. "A pretty game cuss, I reckon," said Sandy, as the bullet ripped through the top of his hat, carrying with it a neatly mown lock of red hair.

"Whew, some good shootin', I calkerlate." Then he began to try, after carefully withdrawing his rifle, to gain a position of 'vantage from farther up the side of the fallen beast. As he crawled forward upon his side, he inadvertently exposed himself, and the last outlaw lost no time in seizing the opportunity.

A spurt of flame shot like lightning from the hillside battle-ground. Sandy felt a paralyzing shock, and released his hold on his rifle, which fell and clattered out of reach.

"He got me! He got me!" Sandy murmured over and over to himself. His hand sought his breast and came away redly stained. He was helpless, but through his mind flashed a recollection of an old Indian strategy, and at once he simulated death.

A long interval of silence followed.

A head appeared above the outlaw's refuge. From around the corner of the rock protruded a part of a face. Still no shot from the traveler crouched behind the dead wheeler. Emboldened by this, the outlaw cautiously got on his feet and peered toward his enemy. Satisfied that he had nothing to fear, he advanced into the open.

Over the field of tragedy he strode, the lust of gold still upon him. He reached the box of the stage, shifted his rifle to the hollow of his arm, and stretched out a grasping hand toward the coveted loot.

The prescience which is every man's inheritance caused him to turn toward his fallen adversary.

From behind that barricade of flesh, upon his knees, resting dizzily on one arm and weakly seeking steadiness of

aim was the supposed dead man. The outlaw's rifle and a heavy Colt's rang in unison. The robber spun upon his heel, dropping his weapon. Slowly he settled to his knees, and then, as though tired, fell forward upon his face. He was not alone in relinquishment.

As if he, too, were wearied of the struggle, Sandy had twisted over on his side, his pistol dropping from nerveless fingers, and one arm distorted under him.

To the ears of the frightened passengers in the coach there came the welcome sound of clattering hoofs and excited voices from down the road. A cavalcade of furiously riding men swung around a curve and made-upon them.

"Lucky that only one horse went over the cliff and that we met the other leader," said the foremost man, as his spurred heels rang on the ground, and his mount, with steaming flanks, came to a dejected halt. While two of the men listened to the frightened explanations of the passengers, the others grouped themselves about the prone figure of Sandy. They lifted him to an easier position and set to work to revive him with gathered snow.

His eyes opened as though from sleep, and his uninjured arm sought the blood-stained breast.

"Must get this to express," he murmured. "Won't get there in time, unless I do. Christmas most here. Had to fight for it, and can't fall down now."

"Well, I'm damned," said one of the men. "This is all that saved that hole from letting his life out. He'll get well, all right."

To the amazement of the curious group, he held in the air and shook out of its foldings a tiny buckskin shirt, stained with blood and perforated through its wadded thickness with a bullet meant to kill.

Again the winds caressed the hill-tops, laid loving hands on the fir-trees, and played dancing tunes for the wild flowers that carpeted the domes back of Sandy's home. Everything seemed good to him in this spring world of his. It was an old world, too, and one whose buffets and scant rewards he had faced uncomplainingly. But to-night, he thought, what more could a man want than this? He reviewed in order the facts that unexpected treasures of gold had been found, that new friends had been made, and, greatest of all, that a letter was lying on his lap. It read:

Dear Pardner:

Of course i was glad to get the gold watch those men sent with the shirt. Muther says they sent it to your namesake because you wouldnt take nothing. But all the boys think the shirt is the best part of the present. muther wanted to wash the stains out but i wouldnt let her. and i wont let her mend the holes in it. Gee but you must have licked 'em. Its got another stain on it now where I cut my thumb with my new nife trying to open the insides of the watch. Good bye

Willie Smith Parks.

ps. Somehow that watch dont run well no more.





# THE AMBASSADOR'S TEAPOT

BY MARY IMLAY TAYLOR



T was only a teapot, but if ever one held a tempest—

In the first place, it was an heirloom in the ambassador's family, and engraved with his crest—the ambassador being a Count of the Holy Roman Empire, a Knight of the Holy Ghost and St. Gregory, and several other things besides! Then it was of fine old silver, with a rose-pattern; but its most conspicuous virtue—a rare one even in a teapot—was that it held nothing but the finest tea, except on one occasion!

Thereby hangs my tale.

It looked a respectable family teapot on the five o'clock tea-table in the embassy drawing-room, where I was pouring tea for the ambassadress while Aunt Elizabeth Keane was talking to her.

Washington society had been there in force all the afternoon; it had been "Miss Thanet this" and "Miss Thanet that," until I was tired out; I couldn't imagine what had kept Jack Griffith away. It was stupid of him; so few men come to these afternoons. I began to think—then I saw him. He's so tall that he loomed up over the group of women in the door.

There was a vacant chair at my table; the others had drifted toward the ambassadress on their way out—I don't mean the chairs, but the people—and presently Jack came and sat down, looking at me eagerly, as if he

expected the most cordial welcome in the world.

I was calmly indifferent.

"You're so late," I remarked, "that the tea is almost gone. I've nothing at all—"

"Not even a welcome, I see," he said tartly; "more's the pity—when a fellow has been thinking of it for hours."

"That's it," I replied, "you're so late that I ceased to expect you."

"Nothing could have prevented my coming," he declared—"except murder or suicide."

I laughed softly. "As you are here—I suppose you didn't happen to escape from the patrol-wagon?" I suggested demurely.

"There are times, Jane Thanet," he replied, "when your perversity and your witchcraft are enough to—"

"Won't you have a cup of tea," I interrupted mildly, "and drop the indictment?"

"I'll take the tea—I thought you said there was none left—but I shall go on with the indictment. I've just been to see Prince Urusof."

I felt myself blushing, and bit my lip.

"Ah, Jane, Jane!" said Jack softly, "I've been so madly jealous of that man, but to-day—I saw that he was a victim, too—"

I gave him a look. "You've no right to criticize me, Captain Griffith," I said indignantly; "none whatever—if I should flirt with the Emperor of China or—or—"

He met my eyes with such an eloquent gaze that I couldn't help blushing and stammering like a foolish schoolgirl.

"No," he murmured, "but it's a right I covet above great riches and the kingdoms of the earth."

"There's your tea," I said, without looking at him; "and I've really drained the teapot and the samovar. Where can Clarkson be? Would you mind ringing for him?"

"I should mind," he said promptly; "let the teapot stay drained. It's always empty when I'm here."

"You come so late," I repeated innocently. "Ah, there's the ambassador."

There was a little flutter as he entered. He was very distinguished, pale and clear-cut and white-haired; and that eye of his—it always makes me shiver a little.

I was looking at the ambassador, but knew that Jack Griffith's hand almost touched mine.

"I've a message for you," he said softly, "from Prince Urusof."

That vexed me—that he should speak for the Russian! "I don't see why he made you his messenger," I said, with averted eyes; "there are such things as postmen and telephones."

"I can't see, either," he replied; "for I can't be disinterested, and, Jane——"

There was an opportune stir in the room, for I didn't want to listen to Jack. "Hark!" I cried imperiously; "what are they saying over there? Something has happened."

We both looked at the people standing around the ambassador; there were sharp exclamations of surprise and horror. Then I saw young Mrs. Strauss detach herself from the group and come toward us. I don't believe she could leave us alone to save her life!

I had a sudden sharp premonition of evil. "What is it, Letty?" I exclaimed. "Prince Urusof is dead," she replied softly; "he has been assassinated."

Jack sprang to his feet. "Impossible!" he exclaimed, in strong excitement.

I said nothing, I only looked back

bravely at Letty Strauss—with a woman's instinct of self-defense. Meanwhile, the ambassador was moving slowly down the room surrounded by his guests. His eye caught Griffith's excited face, and seemed to rest there, questioningly.

"Prince Urusof was shot this afternoon," he said.

"Is he dead?" asked Jack, in a bewildered tone.

The ambassador gravely inclined his head. "Shot through the heart," he began; and then that eye of his suddenly lighted upon me, and he stopped—stopped with an ease and grace of manner which betrayed nothing.

"Some horrible nihilist!" wailed Aunt Elizabeth; she has looked under her bed for nihilists ever since we moved into a diplomatic neighborhood.

Jack turned to me. "I must go," he said in a low voice. "Poor Urusof, I was with him less than an hour ago."

I did not reply; I was making an immense effort to look unconcerned. Half the women in the room believed the stories of my engagement to Urusof. I hoped I hadn't turned pale, though my heart was beating in my throat and my hands trembled.

The people whispered and looked askance at me; and this horror of tragic death was behind it all. I watched Jack go out unheeded, the heavy portières closing softly behind him. Then the ambassador's white face seemed to stand out sharply, and I heard his voice: "He was dead when found," he said; "the windows were all closed, and the door—there was no extended robbery. You remember that curious signet-ring of his?"

"Of course—we all do!" exclaimed Aunt Elizabeth.

"That has been taken," continued the ambassador; "he wore it constantly—it is gone."

"How singular! What could the murderer do with it?" asked Letty Strauss pensively.

"It will serve to betray him," declared the ambassador.

I sat quite still, my eyes fixed suddenly on the table in front of me. I



would have given worlds to shut them; to look away—but I couldn't! There, not two inches from my hand, lay the signet-ring of Prince Urusof!

"Madame, there can be no doubt of it," the ambassador's voice droned. "The first act of the assassin will be to get rid of that ring."

I sat and stared at it; stared like an imbecile. Just there Jack's hand had rested. Was I going mad?

"That ring," went on the ambassador, "will be the connecting-link in the testimony—the damning proof."

My hand closed over it. What should I do? I had no pockets—what devil possessed dressmakers to make our clothes without pockets? There were half a dozen people not two yards from the table—what should I do? The ring seemed to be burning through my palm like a red-hot cinder. Suddenly I thought of the teapot. It must have exercised some malicious influence, or winked at me, or otherwise beguiled me, else why did I think of it at all?

I knew it was empty of all but the tea-leaves—and the tempter leaned on my shoulder. I lifted the lid and dropped the ring softly into the ambassador's teapot.

Then I leaned back in my chair, and the room turned around, while the candles went up and down—up and down—dancing like corpse-lights.

The voices of the guests—at first a long way off—came nearer.

"He was a clever fellow," remarked the ambassador.

Poor Urusof, poor Urusof! I had not even felt sorry until that instant.

"I heard that he had displeased the czar during the war in Manchuria," said Aunt Elizabeth.

"Mere rumors," murmured the ambassador.

"May I have a cup of tea, Jane?" said Letty's voice. "I'm so tired and upset; isn't it all horrid?"

I was desperate. "There isn't a drop," I murmured.

"There must be," she protested. "I never wanted tea so much in my life."

"I'll ring for more," I said icily.

"Oh, but there must be enough left in that teapot!"

"There isn't!" I said. "Clarkson, tea for Mrs. Strauss."

Of course he reached for the teapot. "Bring another," I cried; "this one didn't—didn't draw well to-day."

Clarkson bowed decorously, but his face spoke volumes.

Letty raised her lorgnon; that is one of her last resorts; she can stare at you through it without winking. "It's a love of a teapot; I've always coveted it," she drawled. "Do let me look at it."

I held it up, murder and sudden death in my eye.

"I'm so short-sighted," she said. "What is the design on the lid?"

"A rose-pattern and snakes!" I snapped.

"Is it gold-lined?" she murmured.

"Really," I replied, "I have never been sufficiently ill-bred to look."

She laughed softly. "Haven't you?" she said. "Poor Prince Urusof! Jane, you must feel his death—"

I rose with the teapot in my hand and swept across the room. Everybody turned and stared. "Aunt, may we go home?" I whispered.

Aunt Elizabeth turned—conscience-stricken—and began to make her adieux.

"Do look at Miss Thanet carrying around the teapot!" said Letty Strauss. She stood there, smiling, her lorgnon raised.

"My dear child!" exclaimed the ambassador. "Clarkson, the teapot!"

"I want to—to—" I stammered; "to borrow it." I finished under my breath. Thank Heaven, no one heard!

But every eye was on me; my knees shook under me. Why didn't the floor open? Instead, Clarkson took the teapot.

Five minutes later I sank into the corner of the carriage and burst into tears.

"There, there, child!" said my aunt, full of sympathy. "I never dreamed you cared so much!"

She thought I was weeping for Urusof!

She was at the breakfast-table when I came down the next morning. "Jane," she said, "it's certainly the most astounding thing—there's a whole newspaper page devoted to it. Prince Urusof's ring was found last night!"

It had come—sooner than I expected. I sat down weakly, only half-conscious that old Simon was passing me a dish.

"It was found—in the ambassador's teapot!" climaxed Aunt Elizabeth.

I tried to think of something to say but couldn't. I felt as if even Simon stared at me oddly.

"You know what the ambassador said?" Aunt Elizabeth was all eagerness. "I can hear him now—'That ring will betray the assassin.' They've arrested Clarkson."

Clarkson! I felt like screaming—that dreadful teapot!

"It's a terrible thing," Aunt Elizabeth went on relentlessly. "It's even hinted that it may be a nihilist plot, and Clarkson an English nihilist. Heavens, think how often I've eaten dinner with that man behind my chair!"

I tried to swallow my coffee, but it choked me. Poor Clarkson, why hadn't I thought of him?

"Jane!" said my aunt suddenly. "Jane! Didn't you have that very teapot last night?"

"Of course I used it," I said bitterly. "Do you suppose they could have tea at the embassy without that miserable thing?"

"And you were running around the room with it, I remember now"—Simon had gone into the pantry—"Jane, you'll be called as a witness. Heavens, I'm mortified to death!"

"Be thankful you're not shot to death," I retorted grimly.

"But, Jane, why—"

Happily she got no further. Simon came back with a note for me. I saw Jack's writing, and, opening it hastily, read it, and crushed the paper in my hand.

"What is it?" Aunt Elizabeth asked in a frightened way.

"Nothing!" I shrugged my shoulders, and this time took up my cup with a firm hand and drank my coffee.

Jack had written only a line to say that he was suddenly called away by bad news from home—that was all, but I was alone to face it.

Just then my aunt was called into the morning-room to see old Colonel Barrington, who does law business for her. She left the newspaper, and I read the whole horror through. There is nothing so hideous as black and white type; it makes a thing stare at you so! Of course, there were references to "a society belle" (they might as well have printed Jane Thanet twenty times over); and when I turned the page—there was a reproduction of that teapot!

I dropped the paper. Horrible thoughts rushed over me; poor Clarkson in the station-house; the ring; Jack's face; poor Urusof lying helpless in his chair; Urusof who had loved me— For the moment I was blind and deaf. I ran into the library, and, groping for a window, opened it—I couldn't bear it!

When I turned back, there was Colonel Barrington looking at me kindly over his spectacles. "Jane," he said, with his fatherly air, "this is a bad business, but don't let your aunt frighten you."

I tried to smile. "I'm not easily frightened, colonel," I said.

"No, you're a trump, Jane," he replied; "but you may be called to this inquest. If you are, my dear child, be brave; a word to the wise—"

"I'm an idiot," I said bluntly.

He patted my hand. "Far from it," he said; "but, remember, they'll be establishing a motive. They'll want to prove that jealousy, perhaps, prompted the shooting. You're a beautiful girl, Jane; be careful—what you say will have weight against the—the accused."

I started. "The accused?" I repeated.

He waved his hand hastily. "Good-by, my dear," he said; and almost ran out of the library.

I slipped like water to the floor. They found me there an hour later in a dead faint.

Of course they called me as a wit-

ness. Aunt Elizabeth was overcome with mortification, but felt it her Spartan duty to accompany me. As it was a dingy morning, they kept the electric drop-light burning on the coroner's desk. The place was packed. I never dreamed that so many fashionable people would be there; and how they stared. Heavens, how women can stare!

I held my head high and walked slowly to my seat, but I heard them whispering. Half the newspapers claimed that I was engaged to Urusof. It was all like a horrid nightmare. I almost expected to wake up to find myself falling down-stairs.

Then I tried to fix my attention on the coroner; he was a little man, with bristling gray hair and a wart on his nose.

The surgeon who examined the body was on the stand; and he was ages giving his horrible testimony. The police-sergeant testified, the janitor of the apartment, and Prince Urusof's valet.

I sat stiff and straight, in terror of showing emotion, but all the while I saw how they were working around to Jack's visit. Then the signet-ring was produced and handed about and identified, until I fairly writhed in my chair.

The valet was recalled and questioned about Jack.

"Did Captain Griffith show any emotion?"

"He did."

"Did he notice the absence of the ring?"

"Not until his attention was called to it, sir."

Oh, how I hated the sleek wretch for his tone! It insinuated so much. One little, bald-headed juror looked suddenly illuminated; he had got an idea!

I could not bear to watch them, with their heads together over that ring, and turned and looked at the crowd. It was so dim that the faces showed like white patches, but suddenly I saw Letty Strauss; her eyes were half-closed, and she was watching me through her lashes. I've seen cats look like that before they scratched—when purring

their loudest. I knew perfectly well that she hated me because of Jack; she was always fond of him, she——

Heavens, there was the ambassador's teapot!

The ambassador was there—smooth, courteous, dignified—identifying it. I fixed my eyes on that hateful teapot, and tried to be prepared. Why on earth had I ever trusted it? What did the ambassador say? Oh, it had been in his family one hundred and twenty-three years; and two emperors had been served with tea brewed in it. Then he related the finding of the signet-ring. Clarkson always made the tea, assisted by the second man, Perm.

They called Clarkson. Of course he had to be sworn, and to identify the teapot—— I clenched my hands tightly on the arms of my chair, to keep from screaming.

"You made the tea last Thursday at the embassy, Clarkson?" said the coroner.

"I did, sir."

"Did you put anything in the teapot with the tea?"

"I did not!"—*emphatically.*

"You made the tea and took it into the drawing-room yourself?"

"I did, sir."

"You gave the teapot to Miss Thanet?"

"I put it on the table and refilled it twice. The last time, your honor, she refused to let me have it."

There was an instant's pause; it made the stir in the court-room audible.

"Then you did not take it to the pantry?"

"I did later, sir," replied the witness. "When Madame de Valma called me, Miss Thanet was standing in the center of the room holding the teapot."

"Miss Thanet had taken it from the table?"

"She was ten feet from the table, sir."

"You took it from her?"

"I did—and handed it to Perm."

"Do you know this ring?"

"I do now, sir, since the ambassador

told us about it. I never saw it until Perm turned it out of the teapot."

"Is this the ring that Perm found there?"

"It looks like it, sir."

Perm was called, and corroborated the butler. He had been in the dining-room, and had seen Clarkson take the teapot from me. He found the ring in Clarkson's presence.

"Was there any tea in the teapot?"

"Very little, sir."

"Was the ring in it?"

"In the tea? No, sir, on top of the tea-bag."

"Did it look stained or wet with the tea?"

There was an intense silence. The man speaking slowly but in a clear voice was heard all over the court.

"The ring was dry, sir."

"Is this the ring?"

"Yes, sir."

The ambassador was asked who had been at the tea-table before Clarkson was called to take the teapot. The ambassador could not recollect; he had volunteered his testimony, but he was courteous and vague; however, he finally remembered Captain Griffith.

All this time I sat quite still—looking at the teapot.

"Mrs. Letitia Strauss."

What in the world had she to say?

There was a soft color in her face, and she had a confiding way of looking at men—like most pretty widows. She was looking now at the coroner, and he was evidently affected—even to the wart. She identified the teapot.

"When did you see it last, Mrs. Strauss?" the coroner asked gently.

"On the ambassador's tea-table on Thursday afternoon, and afterward in Miss Thanet's hands." She went on to repeat Clarkson's story.

The signet was produced and identified as one she had always seen on Prince Urusof's hand—he believed it had a happy influence in preserving the life of the wearer.

"Did you see that ring last on the prince's hand, Mrs. Strauss?" asked the coroner.

She hesitated for an instant—an instant that fixed attention on her next utterance. "No," she said softly.

"Where did you see it last?"

She sighed. "On the tea-table at the embassy on Thursday," she replied reluctantly.

"Describe the circumstances."

"It was on the tea-table, and—and Miss Thanet was there."

"Did Miss Thanet see or touch it?"

Letty Strauss hesitated, drew a long breath, and looked at me. "Miss Thanet put it into the teapot," she said.

"Miss Thanet."

I rose and faced the coroner.

"Miss Thanet, can you identify this teapot?"

I forced myself to look at it—wishing I could smash it.

"It is the ambassador's," I answered calmly; nothing mattered now. "I should know it in heaven."

There was a suppressed titter.

"Can you identify this ring?"

"It belonged to Prince Urusof."

"Where and when did you see it last?"

"At the embassy, on Thursday."

There was a stir and murmur, and then silence.

"You were at the tea-table Thursday at the embassy?"

"I was."

"You saw the ring there? Relate the circumstances."

"It was lying on the table when I first saw it."

"You put it in the teapot?"

"I did."

"For what purpose?"

"I do not know."

Silence, no whispers.

"Did you see Captain Griffith put the ring on the table?"

"No!" sharply.

"Did he mention the ring to you?"

"No!"

"Could he have put it there unseen by you?"

"I do not believe so."

"Were you engaged to marry Prince Urusof?"

"No!"—indignantly.

"Had Prince Urusof mentioned this ring to you?"

"Once or twice."

"In what way?"

"Once when he told us of his belief in its good qualities, the second time I—I do not remember."

"When you took the teapot off the table you had already put the ring in it?"

"Yes."

"Why did you take it?"

"I don't know"—inane.

"You are to be married to Captain Griffith?"—abruptly.

"No!"

Insufferable creature; how dared he?

Then I looked up and saw Jack. Of course, I knew all the time he would come back, yet it was a shock—a horrid shock. While he was away I felt more secure, but now I went back to my seat in a state of collapse. I knew what Jack would do, he would make some horrible blunder; he had only just come in, and couldn't have heard what I had said. The man with a wart would lead him like a young lamb to the slaughter. He was sworn, and I heard him explaining that he had left town in answer to a telegram, his father being very ill. His voice comforted me, it was so fresh and composed. Of course, they would believe him; then I looked up and saw that horrid little bald-headed juror, and I gave up hope.

All this while Jack was testifying—calm as a May morning. His talk with Prince Urusof had been purely personal; no, they had never been near a duel.

At last the ring!

I held my breath; what would he say? He identified it, had seen it often on Urusof's finger.

"He gave it to you that last day, Captain Griffith?"

"He did not, sir"—indignantly, and with blank surprise.

My heart stood still. Yes, it was genuine surprise; Jack couldn't feign anything.

"He did not give it to you?"

"No!"

"But you saw it that last day?"—artfully.

"I did, on his finger when we parted."

"Not at the ambassador's?"

"No!"—a sudden rush of color to his face and his eyes—they turned involuntarily to me. Oh, Jack, Jack, the man with the wart saw it—the bald-headed juror saw it!

"Not on the ambassador's tea-table?"

Jack's face was crimson now, he stood staring at the floor. "I do not recall it there," he said slowly.

Silence—only the busy scratching of the reporters' pens, not even a whisper. I could not breathe, the air in the crowded room stifled me, and I turned to Colonel Barrington and told him so. He looked startled, and said something to the man next to him, and the two made a way for me to a little room in the rear. There was a window open, and I went and leaned on the sill. Barrington looked very grave.

"Can't you do something?" I cried. "Don't you see how stupid it all is? Oh, why don't you do something?"

"My dear young lady," he said gently, "I'll go back and listen and report to you."

He was glad enough to hurry off, poor old soul, and leave me to have hysterics if I wanted to. I pushed the window higher and looked out; it had iron bars, and I felt as if I were already in jail and I could hear the buzz and drone in the coroner's room. Would they recall me? Why didn't my aunt come?

To me it seemed as hot as July, yet people wore overcoats down there in the street. Oh, why did I put that ring in the teapot? And Jack didn't leave it there! What had I done? Would they dare to accuse him?

I think I felt hardly toward poor Urusof; what did he mean by getting killed?

Hark, what a stir out there! Could they have made an arrest? I ran to the door and tried to peep out, but every time I opened it I saw only Letty Strauss. If I had been like other

girls I should have cried, but I didn't; I was furiously angry, I wanted to fight somebody, I——

Suddenly Aunt Elizabeth burst through the door with her veil up. "Jane, Jane!" she cried, "they've found out who did it—I'm so thankful!"

"Did you think I did it?" I retorted, out of the bitterness of my soul.

It was Colonel Barrington who gave me a coherent account. The last witness was a little widow who had rooms opposite to Urusof's; her windows commanded his, and she had seen the murder and been afraid to tell! Afraid, until they were going to accuse Jack, then she told how she saw a man come in and shoot the prince—and that man was his valet.

Of course, it was coming out that Urusof had dismissed him that morning and there was a plot.

I listened to Colonel Barrington without a word. That awful ring in the teapot!

The sun shone in the library window and a cheerful fire crackled on the hearth. I sat in a big armchair in the center of the room with the ambassador's teapot in my lap. It had come with two notes; a brief one from the ambassador:

Praying you to accept, with our highest consideration, this teapot which we hope may henceforth bring you happiness. Also this note which was found under the tea-table on that fateful Thursday, and forgotten in the unhappy publicity of the affair.

The enclosed note bore the seal of Prince Urusof. I broke it with reluctance, and a shiver ran through me. It was the old, old story of love and disappointment. It was his valedictory—but not a word of that ring.

It was then that Jack Griffith came in unannounced for the first time since the inquest. Our eyes met, but for a moment neither spoke.

I held up the note. "Did you bring this that day, Jack?"

"Yes," he replied eagerly. "I thought you saw me put in down."

"And the ring, Jack?"

He looked at me strangely. "You thought I put it there?"

I nodded, I wanted to cry.

"But I didn't; it's all out to-day. Perm, the second man at the embassy, is in with Urusof's valet. The murderer ran to the embassy and handed the ring to Perm to hide, and ran back again. They wanted to seal some stolen papers and mail them to Russia at once. Urusof was in some secret societies. Perm confesses that he had only time to thrust it in the outer pocket of his jacket when Clarkson sent him to the tea-table. He dropped the ring there and didn't discover his loss until he opened the teapot in Clarkson's presence."

I fell to shivering again; what a nightmare I had made of it, and what must he think of me?

"Why did you put it in the teapot, Jane?" he asked softly.

I turned away, holding that teapot close; oh, how I hated it! "I was a blockhead, Jack," I said, in a smothered tone; "this awful teapot—it's—it's haunted me—I had only one thought—to—to hide the ring somewhere—and the teapot came back like the ghost in Hamlet!"

Silence—oh, you could have cut it with a knife!

At last his voice—and the tone in it thrilled my heart.

"Jane," he whispered, "you did all that for me—but did you doubt me?"

I looked up; my eyes were moist, but I knew they were radiant. "Never, never for an instant; I would sooner doubt my own soul—I'd——"

"Jane!" he said.

The ambassador's teapot slipped to the floor and rolled unnoticed under the table.



# HALLIDAY'S LUCK



As they turned from the Boulevard Montparnasse into the little cross street, the sidewalk dwindled to a scanty strip, and Halliday stepped off with the indifference born

of long habit.

"Paris sidewalks aren't wide enough for one healthy American, let alone two!" he said. "See that smudge along the wall? That's where the men who come around here have worn their elbows threadbare."

"Rather looks as if the American Girls' Club was a popular Mecca," said Townsend, eying the streak.

"Well, it's not altogether deserted," replied Halliday, pushing open a small door set in a pair of much larger ones.

Townsend followed him into a sort of high, wide tunnel, evidently a former carriage entrance. It passed under the second story of the house into a courtyard, where a few dry leaves, still clinging to the withered plants, rustled crisply.

"*Bon jour, madame,*" said Halliday, opening the *concierge's* door. "*Mademoiselle Garland is at home, n'est-ce pas?*"

The *concierge* nodded with evident friendliness. Halliday would have insisted that her manner was merely a thermometer for the registration of fees, and that the sight of a Latin Quarter student who had frequent attacks of absent-mindedness, causing him to leave five-franc pieces on a *concierge's* table—not his own *concierge*, either!—was as warming to that thermometer as sunlight to the more material variety.

That is what Halliday would have said; and, alas! for the frailty of French friendliness—not to include manners nearer home—he would not have been far from a pretty general truth.

But Halliday would not have mentioned—being, indeed, quite ignorant of the fact—that this carelessness in the matter of five-franc pieces was united, in him, to a certain stalwart loveliness. It was not merely that he was good to look at; though he was. Nor that he and his clothes were built on better lines than are common to the Latin Quarter; though they certainly were. It was neither height nor hats, nor yet an unaccustomed lavishness in the matter of fees, which was entirely responsible for the genial alacrity with which the *concierge* responded:

"But, yes, monsieur; *mademoiselle* receives company this afternoon. Without doubt monsieur is expected?"

"Yes, *madame.*"

"*Eh bien, monsieur* has but to go up."

"Thanks."

The two men crossed the arched passage, but stopped as they came into the courtyard.

"Then you won't go up with me?" said Halliday.

"I'm afraid I haven't time. Perhaps it wouldn't be wise, anyway."

"I suppose not. She might suspect if she knew that you had come around with me. Here's the money," taking some gold pieces from his coin purse. "Fifty francs apiece for the two larger pictures, and"—diving into his pocket for some silver—"seven francs fifty for the little sketch. I've marked them on that catalogue I gave you. I'll be awfully obliged to you."

"No need. I'm glad to see what sort of work these girls are doing."

"Some of it isn't half bad," asserted Halliday, warmly. "These sketches by Miss Garland, for instance. I really want them. You mustn't think I'm having you buy them for me simply on her account."

"Why—is she hard up?" asked Townsend, with a frank curiosity which made Halliday wince.

"Oh, no! I fancy she has money enough. Perhaps you won't understand, but it's something like this: no matter what other luggage we students bring over here, all of us have a belief in ourselves tucked away somewhere. We're so full of hope that we very nearly float off on the first strong wind; and we're that stiff you could use us for battering-rams. It comes harder on the art students than it does on us architects, but all of us get pretty low in our mind sometimes. Our belief in ourselves tumbles down, and there's nothing left but our determination to succeed, whether or no. It's like trying to climb a place where a pair of stairs has been, but has collapsed. I've an idea Miss Garland is having a siege of that sort now, and if she knew I bought any of the things she has in the girls' exhibition she couldn't be made to believe I did it for any other reason than to encourage her. See?"

"Yes, I see," said Townsend, though he discreetly concealed just what he saw.

He had indulged in considerable secret speculation during the past hour as to Halliday's object in giving him this commission; but he believed now that, although his flying visit to Paris was to end on the following day, he should not have to puzzle over the incident. Halliday's impulsive expression of sympathy had been very illuminating. So that was the way the wind set, was it? Well, he hoped it would blow good luck to the boy. Townsend's thirty years were apt to patronize Halliday's twenty-five at times, and he held out his hand now with a benevolent smile.

"All right. I'm off in the morning;

so if you don't get down to the hotel before I go, I'll leave the pictures with the porter for you. Where is this exhibition, anyway?"

"Take that stairway across the yard. You'll find cabs upon the boulevard when you come out. I won't say goodbye, for I'm sure to see you in the morning; so it's only *au demain*."

The two men separated, and Halliday, turning into one of the narrow stairways, ran up the bare steps two at a time.

That strenuous method of stair mounting, however, is not likely to produce palpitation of the heart in an athletic young giant of twenty-five, even if he climbs, as Halliday did, to the third floor. Something else, therefore, must have been responsible for a certain breathlessness with which he went down the long passage to a door at the very end. Perhaps if you could have seen his eyes when the door was opened by Olive Garland, you would have guessed, even without any previous hint, what that something was.

Olive's pulse quickened responsively as she met Halliday's glance, and felt the strong, warm clasp of his hand. He had been quite right in surmising that her stock in herself, at least as a girl with a career, had gone so low that she was absolutely, though perhaps only temporarily, bankrupt both in hope and ambition. For weeks she had been dwelling with a dismal conviction that there was but one career of which she was capable, and that was too common, both as a vocation and as a noun, to be decked out with capitals. Matrimony, the common lot of women, even of women who didn't know chrome from ocher, and who could as easily have drawn lottery prizes at will as have drawn a foreshortened arm—matrimony seemed to parade before her imagination with an air of triumph, as if well aware that it alone remained to her.

A year, perhaps even six months, before these days of early winter, this growing sense that she could not achieve that capitated career would have been a bitter disappointment to her. Even now,

if it had come alone, she would have fought it fiercely.

But it did not come alone. She was rich in convictions at the beginning of this, her third winter in Paris. The summer had insinuated one in particular into her mind; and though she had not yet formally acknowledged its presence, she had a comforting feeling that it would prove to be a very welcome guest—after a while.

She had known Halliday about a year. For quite eleven months of that time she had known also that if she but stretched out her hand, not only matrimony in general, but an uncommonly attractive specimen of matrimony in particular, would be free to her.

Halliday was somewhat later, perhaps, in making the same discovery. A man is apt to continue the delusion that he is a free agent even when he has to keep swallowing hard to prevent himself from pouring forth his abject surrender.

But the spring came and so did Halliday's avowal. He loved the pretty, plucky girl who knew cornices from capitals, even when he had forgotten everything except how her eyes brightened and darkened in her enthusiasm. He was glad that she did know these architectural items. He saw himself—become a famous architect—discussing cornices and capitals with her; perhaps even back stairs and butler's pantries. But that would be far off in the future, when they should have been married a long time and his present overwhelming desire to touch those little curls, clustering in her neck, should have been in a slight degree satisfied.

At present, the prospect of its being satisfied in any degree whatever was not bright. Olive's heart, when Halliday asked for it, was in her work. Olive herself said so. She further announced that she was going to Cernay-la-Ville for the summer and—no! he must not come there and disturb her.

"Then it would disturb you?" Halliday had demanded.

And Olive had denied in words, though her eyes evaded his, and the color stole into her face. In short, she

had refused Halliday as girls have a trick of doing; a refusal which is one part denial and two parts encouragement.

She did not deliberately compound it according to that formula. She had not doubted that her heart really was entirely in her work; and it was a decided surprise to her to find that it kept straying off after this arch-enemy of that career of which she had dreamed.

The summer was full of study; three months of puzzling over "balanced effects," "composition of light," "tone values"—and Halliday. He had not needed to come to Cernay to succeed in "disturbing" her. There were days when she felt a lamentable indifference to the balance of a composition and could not experience a vital concern about the subtleties of the middle distance; a state of mind which recurred so frequently that it was a very unsettled young person who returned to the atelier in the autumn.

She did not definitely admit it to herself even then, but in reality she was only a very modified girl-with-a-career. She still believed success possible to her, but the desire for it was no longer paramount. What she now wanted was to take a few long strides in her work; prove to herself and to others that she could have had that career if she had cared enough for it. Then, when she should have demonstrated this—well, there was a formless but real intention in the background of her thoughts, and it had to do with that other career which Grant Halliday had offered her.

It amounted to a mere "saving her face." She wanted to be able to show Halliday that she *chose* to be his wife; that she had an alternative, and was not marrying simply because she had been defeated in her first ambition.

So she plunged into her work and for a while it went well. The very first week, the *maitre* himself suspended his habitual damning with faint praise, and, after ten minutes of actual criticism, passed on, leaving a gruff "Very good" echoing like a strain of music in her ears. That day she walked on air.

But there were other days—weeks of

them—when to her eager longing the work dragged, and limped, and stood still. The very feverishness of her determination to climb by leaps and bounds made her fall back again and again. She told herself that it had been ridiculous for her to dream of painting, and that the whole Quarter—the American part of it, at least—would say that she was simply covering her defeat by turning to matrimony. Perhaps even Halliday himself would doubt. The thought was intolerable, and she worked on grimly, with what Halliday had described as the determination to succeed, whether or no.

It was all very foolish, of course, to want to take her love to him in one hand and, in the other, the voluntary yielding of dreams which he knew had been so dear to her. Foolish, but not altogether displeasing to Halliday if he had known anything about it. His ignorance on that point, however, was complete and unblissful. He hadn't the remotest idea that, in flattering Olive's hopes by maneuvering the sale of her sketches, he was aiding his own fortunes. On the contrary, he had a rather forlorn conviction that he was doing himself a very bad turn—yet did it, for the sake of banishing from her eyes the discouragement which had shadowed them of late. As he looked down at her now, he was in a state of mingled pious self-satisfaction and profane self-ridicule.

The room was a wide one up under the roof, which sloped down at the sides until it almost reached the floor. There was only one window, and it looked toward the west, so that the early-setting sun was shining across it in long, level rays. But the corners and the low sides were dusky with fine nets from Brittany, out of whose brown shadows there was an occasional flash of golden light from a great Dutch milk can, or some other piece of burnished brass. At one side, a recess ran back under a skylight, and from behind the screen which shut it off came a gayly reproving voice:

"Olive, do you mean to tell me that Grant Halliday is here already?"

"Well!" exclaimed Halliday. "Ingratitude, thy name is Maynard!"

A hand, still clutching a comb, caught at the top of the screen, and a pair of scornful blue eyes peered over it.

"Ingratitude! Would the gentleman with his hair parted crooked?"—Halliday put an involuntary hand up to his head—"explain what we have to be grateful for?"

"If the lady whose hair isn't parted at all will recall the fact that she has invited a blethering red socialist here for tea, she will—"

"Pooh!" said Celia Maynard, coming from behind the screen and giving the comb a nonchalant wave. "I'm what's known as a person of good parts, but they're not all visible to the careless observer. Don't groan that way. Miss Wilson next door will think we're in our last agony. How do you like my hair, anyway? I didn't have a *bonnet rouge* to please the socialist, so I've been ever since *déjeuner* making this scarlet bow. Recognize it?"

"Why—I can't say—"

"There, Olive! I told you he wouldn't know. Olive's an awfully unaccommodating person," she went on, still emphasizing her remarks by waves of the comb. "Not a bit of sympathy with the great cause, either! I might have worn green—or yellow—or *both* to-day, for all she cared. Why, she was that stingy about her old ribbon you'd have thought it was cloth of gold. And it's only the ribbon that came on the flowers."

Celia's blue eyes were as wide and as innocent as if she did not know that Halliday himself had sent the flowers, and as guileless as if she did not intend to convey a hint of Olive's feeling for him. In certain matters, these blue-eyed, infantile creatures have a wiliness which is appalling. Celia further demonstrated hers by removing herself and her comb behind the screen again, leaving Halliday no possible chance of missing the heightened color in Olive's face, as she bent over the tea table.

Even if the nature of this piece of furniture had not been an open secret, it would never have been able to clear itself of the suspicion that it was *en masque*. As it was, everybody knew that it was a drawingboard surmounting

Celia  
port  
cloth  
plate  
spoon  
caddy  
of E  
Celia  
H  
mad  
but a  
face  
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Celia's up-ended steamer trunk; a support which showed frankly below the cloth, while above were *gaufrettes* on a plate of Quimper faience, Florentine spoons, a Cantigalli teapot, a Dutch caddy, and cups from the four quarters of Europe—souvenir-honey gathered by Celia and Olive in their flittings.

Halliday went over to the table, and made a pretense of examining things; but as he saw the flush deepen in Olive's face and realized that she avoided his eyes, a light of hope dazzled him so that he could not have told Nove from Sèvres.

"We're going to tame the socialist by feeding him on his native element," said Olive, uncovering a tea cake and a plate of bread-and-butter slices.

"He's English, then?"

"As English as a cold pork pie."

"That's conclusive," laughed Halliday.

As he watched Olive put the teakettle on the ugly little stove, he wished devoutly that Celia would have a harmless passing attack of deafness and blindness.

But Celia reappeared; combless this time, and without the slightest indications of parting, even for a moment, with the use of her ears and eyes. Fortunately for the ease of the occasion, she was equally far from dumbness, and chattered as gayly and as unceasingly as if nobody—least of all herself!—knew or cared what she said. Some reference she made to the exhibition in the wing across the courtyard finally sent Halliday's thoughts back to the commission he had given Townsend.

By this time, he reflected, Olive's pictures had been bought and carried off; for Townsend was to have asked for immediate possession because of his leaving Paris so soon. Halliday began to wish he had not yielded to his quixotic impulse. Olive's confusion over the reference to the ribbon had sent his hopes soaring, and he assured himself that he had been a fool to put a spoke in his own wheel. He promptly repented of this piece of selfish concern, however, and when Celia suddenly remembered that she had forgotten to report a sale

to the girl in charge of the exposition, Halliday yielded to another impulse; one which he knew would make it still more unlikely that Olive should suspect him of being behind Townsend's purchase.

"Will you do an errand for me, too?" he asked Celia. "I want that sketch Olive made of Notre Dame in the fog. It's a bully bit of work, and I wish you'd have it tagged 'Sold.' I'll go in and see about it when I leave here."

Olive had made a gesture of protest; had even opened her lips to say that he could not, should not have the sketch. But she knew that if she refused to let Halliday buy a picture which was publicly for sale, she would by that very act admit that she held him apart from everyone else. So she bit her lips, and was silent; but inwardly she told herself that Halliday should have known—should have realized. And in the tears of vexation which rose almost to her eyes at the thought of his patronage—for, of course, he was doing it only to encourage her; not because he wanted the thing!—the poor, mistaken fellow's immediate chances were swallowed up and drowned.

It was only five minutes before the *concierge* came lumbering up, shrilly proclaiming a hopelessly French version of the socialist's name; but that brief interval sufficed for Halliday to ask the question which had been trembling on his lips. If anything had been wanting to complete the girl's recoil, it would have been supplied by the touch of confidence in his manner.

Was he, then, so sure that she had been defeated in her ambition; so confident that the time had come when it only remained for *him* to stretch out *his* hand? All her proud plans for coming to him in the rôle of a queen, who voluntarily yielded another throne that she might share his, were miserably upset. She saw herself now merely a captive after defeat, and, before she had fairly realized what she was doing, she abruptly declined to reopen the subject.

The sharp reversal of his hopes left Halliday silent and somewhat dazed. It is a question if the socialist ever "blethered" to more unheeding ears than those

he addressed during the ten minutes before Celia came back, followed very soon by several other girls who also lived at the club. Then half a dozen American students came dropping in, ravenous after their day in the ateliers; for one never works so hard and the models never pose so well as in the short daylight of early winter.

The socialist was allowed to bletcher undisturbed until the teapot was being filled the second time. Then the uncontrollable tide of "shop," which flows wherever even two or three art students are gathered together, swept the poor man from his bearings and irresistibly bore down every other subject. Inevitably the girls' exhibition was mentioned, whereupon Celia bounced excitedly out of the cushions where she had burrowed a nest for herself.

"Olive!" she gasped. "What do you think has happened?"

"Oh, I suppose Collin said *assez bien* instead of *pas mal* to-day."

Celia shook her head contemptuously, and turned to the silenced socialist.

"I don't want to appear inhospitable," she said, "but I'm so glad you didn't come earlier and bring a bomb. Perhaps you're good at resisting temptation. I'm not. But if you had found yourself face to face with a millionaire, or a good imitation of one, you might have been tempted to present him to your bomb—or your bomb to him; I suppose they wouldn't stand upon the order of the introduction. As it was, you must have trod on his gilded heels."

Halliday knew what was coming, but he was too sore and miserable to care very much how Olive received the news he had provided. He listened indifferently as Celia went on in reply to a chorus of incredulity.

"Well, if you'd go over to the exhibition and see Martha Babcock using up reams of paper, writing 'Sold' cards to put on pictures, and Abby Cochran sitting on a box of money, as if she expected to hatch out a fortune, I guess you'd believe me!"

"A box of money?"

"Um-m. Full! And, Olive, *four* of your pictures are gone! Abby says

she's got the money in the box. You'd think she had the Bank of France. The man was an American, and he took six pictures with him. The sad, strange part of it is that he overlooked every one of mine. If I could get his address I'd send them after him—if I didn't go myself. But Abby and Martha let him escape with all his secrets."

Halliday did not have altogether to simulate surprise. Six pictures! Then Townsend had bought some on his own account.

"How about the sketch I wanted?" he remembered to ask, as a matter of form.

"Gone, *mon ami*."

"Was it? I should have been glad to have it."

Olive, the center of a congratulatory group, had little to say, but her eyes shone with pleasure; and Halliday told himself that now his fate was doubly sealed. He could not know that the girl's deepest delight was because she saw herself rehabilitated in his eyes.

When he took the first opportunity of making his escape, and she was unusually gentle, he attributed it only to a passing compunction, and, for the next few weeks, his unbroken avoidance of the Girls' Club was a sore blow to the hopes the *conciierge* had entertained of a lavish New Year's gift from her favorite.

It went on to the day before Christmas, and Olive and Halliday had not met since that afternoon tea up under the roof. If ever homesickness takes hold of those stout young hearts over there, if ever the romance of "the Quarter" seems rotten beside the sound, if prosaic, wholesomeness of the home across the sea, it is at Christmas time.

Between this homesickness and the gloom which had already possessed him, Halliday was desperate. He spent the evening wandering restlessly from one café to another, until, toward twelve o'clock, he suddenly quitted the "Boul Mich" with feverish haste, and struck off through the narrow, dark streets toward St. Sulpice.

Why had he not thought of it before? Two-thirds of the Americans in the Quarter would be at the midnight



service there. If one edged about through the crowd one could nod to half the people one wanted to see and to all the people one didn't want to see. It was more than likely that Olive would be there. And as he came up behind the church, its windows glowing with unaccustomed light, it seemed to Halliday that he had never wanted anything as he wanted now to see her.

The weather had been unusually cold for a week, so that the fountain in the square was edged with ice and the air was crisp and keen; but as Halliday pushed open the church door a warm, close breath met him, heavy with incense and the presence of a great congregation. The organ seemed to take this heavy atmosphere and mold it into huge balls, which it rolled from end to end of the nave, lifted to the dome, and then dropped thundering to the pavement. Above these reverberations rose and fell the chants for which the choir is famous; while at every pause one was conscious of the unceasing rasp of feet on the stone floor.

At the rear of the church, Halliday stopped to look about him. The nave had been filled, to the last chair, by those who were willing to pay a few sous for the privilege of a seat within its wooden railing. Those who were too late for the chance and the great crowd of the more economical had drifted first up the side aisles, pressing for points of vantage between the great pillars.

The rear of the church was always last to fill, so Halliday began to worm his way through the mass of people in the right aisle. He had gone halfway to the altar before he caught sight of the face he was looking for. In the nave, not twenty feet from him, Olive was sitting with Celia and half a dozen other girls from the club.

As Halliday saw how absently she followed the service and with what a forced smile she acknowledged some whispered comment by the irrepressible Celia, his wish fathered a whole family of hopes. Perhaps, after all, she did care. Perhaps she had not meant to send him away, or regretted having done so. Perhaps and perhaps! It is

always so. Hope surely finds no more fertile soil to spring in than the breast of a lover.

As Halliday stood watching her hungrily, the silver bells at the high altar were rung and the church suddenly fell silent. In the nave, where alone it was possible, the people knelt; but here and there Halliday could see a group of bobbing hats. Both the hats and the bobbing he recognized as unmistakable Americanisms, and he had a glow of satisfied pride when he saw that Olive did not join in this display of Yankee curiosity.

The bells rang again: once—twice—three times. The hush was absolute. Halliday bent his own head, though not so low that he lost sight of the girl who, just then, was his whole religion. Suddenly she slipped to the low *prie-dieu* in front of her and bowed her head on her hands.

Perhaps there is never a time when a woman seems to a man so touchingly feminine, so complete in her purity and her dependence, as when he sees her kneeling in church, and believes that it is neither affectation nor the mere commonplace of custom. Halliday was like any other man in this; so there was something peculiarly reverent and tender in his eyes when Olive, rising with the congregation, turned to find herself looking straight at him. At first she seemed startled, incredulous. Then, though the ever-ready color crept up, she did not look away, but let Halliday see in her eyes a tenderness which matched his own.

He was waiting for her at the rear of the church after the service was over. Perhaps there was more diplomacy than accuracy in the fear he expressed that she would be stifled in the crush at the doors. At any rate, when he had drawn her into the lee of one of the pillars, he was conveniently oblivious to the fact that Celia and the others were moving on with the crowd.

A poor box was fastened to the wall close by, and, partly from a wish to do or to say something impersonal, partly from the impulse to pay out, in some way, an overgreat happiness, Olive

opened her purse and put in some small coins. Suddenly she checked herself, and held out a piece of silver.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "I don't want to give *that* away; even to the poor. Do you know what it is?"

Halliday took it, and looked up in surprise.

"My lucky piece! How did you get it?"

"Your—lucky—piece!"

"Well, it served me in that capacity until it disappeared a little while ago. See, it's a dime, coined the year I was born; and I've made those little marks on it, one for every year of my age. Where *did* you find it?"

Olive stared at him for a moment without speaking. Then she said, slowly:

"It was in the money paid for those things of mine that were sold at the exhibition."

Halliday started. In a flash the situation was clear to him. He had mistaken the silver dime for a fifty-centimes piece and had given it to Townsend. He stood confusedly regarding his quondam "lucky piece," wondering how he could disown it, when Olive laid her hand on his arm.

"Tell me, honestly. Is it yours?"

Halliday looked up, and met her gaze squarely.

"I believe it is."

"Did you buy those things of mine?"

"I asked Townsend to buy them for me."

In his heart there was a rush of things he wanted to say; explanations, protests, avowals, pleas. But some impulse kept him silent. The people still scraped by on their slow progress to the doors, but the mass of them could not have understood even if they had heard. Besides, any vagary of Americans is overlooked in Paris as a harmless, though sometimes startling, expression of the erratic national character. Secure in

this semi-solitude, Halliday and Olive faced each other without the necessity of wearing a mask.

"Do you know what I did?" she said at last, in a low tone. "The dime came to me with a chance I had been waiting for, and I took it for *my* lucky piece. I had so wanted to succeed in my work, or to show that I could succeed, before—before I gave it up for something else. And when those pictures were bought, I thought it proved that I could amount to something—some time; something beside just what you asked. But you didn't come back after that happened. I know! I couldn't blame you. But tonight," she confessed, "I actually prayed that you would come; and when I looked up, there you were! I was so happy; and now—now I'm back again just where I was."

The tears were really in her eyes now; tears of disappointment and mortification, but with a gleam of amusement shining through them. She suddenly seemed to herself a visionary goose, and she said as much to Halliday. When he protested eagerly, she replied by a pretty dropping of her hands, palm outward, quite as if she had learned in a school of expression the proper gesture for surrender.

"Yes, I am!" she said. "But if you haven't engaged your Christmas goose yet, and still want me——"

Halliday swept her into the crowd with a sudden loss of concern about it. *Semi-solitude* was not enough for him now. He thought of the long, dim streets outside and drew her with him.

As the people closed about them, pressing her so close to his side that his breath actually stirred those same little curls which had been so long the object of his dreams, he laughed a short laugh of utter content.

"Olive," he said, with deep conviction, "you're the kind of a goose I could eat at one mouthful!"



# ALTAR WINE



By *E. Temple  
Thurston*



THEY say that custom, habit, inherited instincts—heredity, in short—play the all-important part in this scheme which for want of better name has been called life.

They say—that truly is the utmost that they or any of us can do—that our virtues and our vices are not our own; our instincts and our natures do not belong to us; that every characteristic we possess is the inheritance from a former generation; that we do but walk in footsteps imprinted on the sands of the ages, with no power of free will to step either to the right or to the left. We imagine that we choose a certain course, and call ourselves free agents; they tell us that this very choice has been inherited, been influenced, governed even, by those ancestors who have preceded us. Free will? they exclaim. Does a river following its course between two banks to the inevitable sea display free will in the pursuit of its destination? We are as impotent in our choice of birth as we are in our choice of life—slaves to heredity, gyved in the steel of impulses and instincts that are not, never will be, our own.

Try to confute them, and they will take refuge in the logic of their universal negation; only faith can pass them by, untouched, as faith has passed through a thousand furnaces of destruction since the days of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. This story here before you, this tale of Father Joseph—since by that tide he was best known to those who came within his sphere—may be a proof in favor of this overwhelming theory of heredity. They who tell you these things would take

it to their hearts, wrapped in the joy of the trading instinct that welcomes any to its way of thought. It seems no proof to me. I see the individual all through it; never the generation. So you behold my beliefs. I deny heredity? Not at all. It gives us all we possess; but what we gain, that is our own. That which Father Joseph gained—if, indeed, it was a gain—was his very own. No inheritance there. Call it a prompting of custom to an individual choice and I am with you. Habit! Are we nothing more than habits toiling in the shades of the generations that have been? Is our history all a past? Surely there is a future straight in front? In the name of God let us believe it so.

Listen, then, to the story of Father Joseph, and judge for yourself. I wish to offer no definition of his actions.

In a chapel close to the fields of Lincoln's Inn, where some of the byways of London have been forgotten and grown old by themselves, Father Joseph was the officiating priest. He lived in the presbytery near-by, where the rooms were comfortless, barren, uninviting. You imagine the fat of the land, rich wines, solid foods in the Roman Catholic presbytery. There is something Plantagenet in the idea. We have seen the monk of artist's conceptions debauched with good living. Since the days of Henry VIII., this has been the accepted idea of the man in monastic orders. Maybe it has served its purpose. Have done with it now—it is the exception, not the rule. Father Joseph pursued no such indulgences. You find him living the strict life; a pilgrimage across sharp stones, a narrow way always ascending; no shelters but the wayside shrines that barely cast a shadow on the statues

within them. So men struggle for Heaven, believing it the best—eyes closed, heart bleeding. So far as it is sacrifice to others, why question their beliefs?

You will find infinite self-sacrifice in the life of Father Joseph. This was a man whose very tissue the church had claimed. His face alone would have shown it. High cheek-bones rising roughly to the deep-set eyes. Long, thin lips, that parted sensitively with suggestion of temerity. Eyes burning beneath the brows—coals in hollow braziers. Here is the ascetic; there is no mistaking them. In the network of the churches you find them caught like flies in a web; dazzled with the shimmer of silken threads, beating their wings; but for closer captivity rather than for freedom.

Father Joseph had suffered. You might have seen it at a glance. Deep lines, cut clean, creased the white forehead, carved furrows by the mouth. What suffering was it to have plowed so sure a way? Upon his chin you would have found a cleft, almost a scar, hewn out of the solid bone. There was the root of the suffering; so say, at least, the physiognomists. A cleft upon the chin indicates a susceptibility to the fascination of the other sex. Mere materialism! What has a dimple or a cleft to do with it? Father Joseph, nevertheless, possessed one. Nothing would have been said about it, however, had not the physiognomist's deduction in this case proved to be correct. Susceptible to the fascinations of the other sex? That alters the whole picture, you say. Father Joseph straightway becomes a sensualist. Thus one may see how hard it is to paint with words! Yet remember the thin lips and the high cheek-bones of the ascetic; do not forget the eyes—deep-set, burning. Why fling all these away for a cleft in the chin? Father Joseph was no sensualist.

At the age of seventeen, swept in a sudden rush of premature development, Father Joseph had been borne away on the wings of a cloud—a cloud they call romance. Imagine how a boy of that

age rushes into love. The cool breeze of reason touches him not at all; a gale it is that eddies around him as he careers wildly toward that goal, the consummation of his desires. Imagine, then, that mad flight broken—snapped. It is like the little pellet of death finding its bed in the breast of the bird that is dropping headlong down the wind on those outstretched wings that were once scythes mowing the air. The firm neck loosens; the keen poise of the head crumples into shapelessness. Like tired pennons falling against the mast-head, the brave wings sink limp and shattered. Robbed of its impetus, the bird topples helpless with an aching thud to the earth beneath.

So ended the love of Father Joseph. Two years' flight over the green of the fields, in the light of the sky; then the shattered frame that once had moved in the exultation of life.

He had lifted her little brother up in his arms, saying good-by.

"You're shaking, Joseph," said the youngster; "shaking all over."

Joseph put him down, and found bent upon him the first look of pity in her eyes.

"I didn't know it had meant so much," she said to him as he took leave of her.

"The boyish fancy?" His smile was cut with a chisel in stone.

"But I didn't know it had meant so much," she repeated. She gave him the look of pity once more—eyes with unshed tears in them—in return for the compliment he had paid her.

But — "the boyish fancy" — that phrase had hit it, you imagine, however much in irony he had meant it? Everything is sensation with the boy, of nineteen doomed to sterility. Had she not killed it with her mood? Time, say you, would have wrought the same havoc with its sickle. His departure, bent, bowed, as with a sentence of servitude to be worked out where no sun shone; his entrance into the church — these actions convince you of the force of your arguments. Sensation, you assert once more. In reply, I would tell you that the boy of nineteen,

jilted, is as likely to go to the devil for sympathy as to the church. But to the church, as it happened, went Father Joseph, and the church treated him well; turned his bitterness to austerity, his fever to asceticism, his passions to zeal by an alchemy that lies secreted in the mysterious potions in its laboratories. The fascination of a knowledge of the unknown, the magnetism of the magician's wand of revelation, have been the potent factors in the evolution of the mind of man. Father Joseph fell under the spell of them—bade nature go its own way, and cast off the smock of the fields for the robes of the acolyte, serving with smoking censer at the altar of mystery and of revelation. At the dawn of the mind, the world would have staggered and fallen had not these priests of the supernatural appeared to show the twisting labyrinths of the way.

At twenty-three, then, you see him a celibate, with the past concealed within the past, yet preserved as a fly in amber, needing only the hammer of circumstance to break the transparent walls of its prison and the breath of passion to breathe into it the blood of life. At seven-and-thirty behold him just the same; Father Joseph officiating in the little chapel on the borders of the fields of Lincoln's Inn. It was here and at this period that the hammer of circumstance fell—and at the blow, the preserving amber of memory fell in pieces; the relic of the past lay there before him; and all the passion of his blood, beaten for years into submission, breathed into the relic till it glowed with life.

One night in November, when the foot-ways glistened with the polish of the rain, and street-lamps danced reflections in the puddles of the road, Father Joseph's caretaker knocked at the priest's sitting-room. He was fighting with Haeckel in a confusion of ideas.

"There's a lady to see you in the waiting-room, father."

Father Joseph threw Haeckel aside. Interruption came with a sigh of relief.

"I'm coming," he replied.

In the waiting-room there was no light. The glimmer from the street-lamp outside was a mockery—a hollow laugh of brilliancy. The figure that stood in the gloom had no meaning for him; his glance swept it as he said something in greeting.

"We had better have some light," he added.

With a swift movement the woman intercepted his motion toward the bell.

"Father Joseph——"

This was the hammer's blow. The amber of memory, holding in its translucent grip that relic of the past, fell into glittering atoms. The past was there before him, transformed in an instant to the absorbing present. Her words, though scarcely whispered, clattered through the silence. The emaciated light-making conditions were as nothing. She was there beside him; dropped out of the years into one precise moment of time—that moment. So she had been traveling toward him through the space of circumstance as the bolt that is shot forth from a world into the blue. So she had come as the bolt speeds from one magnetic power to another, until it feels the constant force drawing it nearer and nearer to its end. Now she had reached the end. She was there beside him, the journey through space accomplished with a completeness that, by the thrill in her voice, he felt to be definite. There was a lilt of fate in it all. A string was set throbbing; it vibrated through his blood as he stood there, arrested, staring at her in the darkness. The years were lifted from him. He was back in the past, a boy again, with a boy's blood racing through him.

"Mary——" Twice he repeated her name. "What brought you here?"

In the darkness she told him.

Whenever a woman comes back to a man there is a story first to be told.

## II.

The town of Malaga lies in a hollow of red-brown, arid hills; the houses are small, insignificant, except for the colossal cathedral. Climb up to the

Gibalfaro, a Moorish tower on the summit of one of the hills, and look down; it is like a collection of red and white pebbles in the cup of a giant's hand. The pale, tarnished silver green of the olive-trees marching up the hill-sides soften the dryness of it all, though even these are as if the dust had sprinkled them. Roads shrink away into the distance—bands of white. Almost always, it seems, the sky lifts up a roof of amazing azure with here and there white clouds, like waves arrested in the breaking.

Away in the hills, looking out over the city, sits El Palo—a pueblo—village—of scanty inhabitants following lazily their various pursuits. It is here that one named Mariano has a little inn—there are a thousand and one Marianos in Spain—there are more than a thousand and one of these little inns. Up the dusty road to Mariano's inn came, one day, Father Joseph. The lady of that November night in the waiting-room of the Lincoln's Inn presbytery was with him. Suspicions rush to the worst. Why is that? Do we judge ourselves by the appearances of things? Scarcely—then why others? Yet it happens so. Admitted that there is cause here for suspicions; at least temper them with charity. Believe that the man of fifteen years' victory over the senses is not swept away in the flood with the first rush of the torrent. Take it for granted that he counts those years of self-denial for something, desiring not willingly to lose the harvest that they are yielding for the sake of the ripened fruit that needs but a twitch of the stalk to bring it to his hand. No doubt he felt that here was life to be lived, youth to be regained. The voices cry that conviction, there is no drowning them. But do not suppose that the voices are obeyed at the first word. There is the struggle of Ulysses, off the coast of Circe's island, with the limbs lashed to the mast, no wax in the ears, eyes gaping from their sockets. Put wax in the ears of the seamen, that is life. The sirens shall sing to you alone. Where would life be, what the worth of it, without their

singing? But first see that the ropes are well knotted, fast bound.

The ropes were like manacles about Father Joseph. An idea that binds men for nigh upon twenty centuries is not snapped by the straining of an arm or the grinding of the teeth. Father Joseph felt the ropes cutting the flesh as he struggled in response to her siren call. How she sang! Soft notes beneath the breath tremulous with meaning, importunate with passion, drugged with delight. You see him listening with all his heart—ears mere intermediaries to the sound—it is the heart that listens.

She was governess in a family—this brings us from metaphor to fact. The master of the family would be her master as well. He had a will of iron, an eye of steel; so long as he could keep her with them, he had sworn to win her. She counted moments to the end—dreading the end, shrinking from it, knowing it inevitable. Then, before they had come to Spain, she had found Father Joseph. How, you ask, comes it that he alone was with her? For what reason was he there, at her side, threading a way among the islands of Sirenuse? The family happened to be in Malaga. To a quiet hotel in that city came Father Joseph, hoping to save her, doubting to save himself, seeing the damnation of them both. To risks such as these men come; the sinner rushing in where the saint is faint of heart and falters.

Mariano's inn at El Palo was their first trysting-place. In one of the little rooms, the floor strewn with sawdust, the vines hanging in the window dangling their grapes luxuriously, they sat down.

"Bring wine," said Father Joseph. Excuse for their presence there must be. There were moments with her when he felt watched on all sides.

The wine was brought, the bottle, the glasses, laid upon the rough, trestle-table between them. When Mariano had gone she leaned toward him with eyes that drew his, as the hook, firm-fastened in the flesh of its victim, draws it slowly surely, with the measured clicking of



the winding reel. So she had drawn him years before; for, if her tackle was delicate, it was taut. Women are the exponents of the tight line. From the little window behind them the stray hot breaths of wind blew through her hair toward him.

"These fifteen years are nothing," she said. "They've tried to bury you and failed. I left you living—you were mine then. Look! Can you deny it? Do you remember when you lifted Teddy in your arms—the day you were going? Teddy could lift *you* now"—her hand caught his wrist—"God! how thin you are! How can you call this life—this wasting into nothing? You've been afraid to live, because you know what burns beneath. And who set that burning? You know we were meant to live, you and I. That day you trembled, when you lifted Teddy—I knew then—church or no church—that I'd burnt my mark on you. Can you tell me that you've never thought of me all these years—of what I might have been—of what maybe I was, to some one else?"

The question struck him like a blow, and he groaned.

"You think you've lived yet? You don't know what life is."

That subtle offer that she could teach him, the poison of it ran like a mill-race through his blood. Lifting up the bottle of wine, he filled their glasses, and his hand was strained, quivering. She watched it, seeing victory.

"To-morrow"—she raised her glass to her lips—"to-morrow we can be a hundred miles away from here. How you tremble—even now—can't you see you're killing yourself? Drink some of the wine."

He lifted his glass; the wine trickled between his lips. Then slowly the glass descended. The hand that held it was rigid as of stone.

"Altar wine," he whispered. "Altar wine."

"What do you mean?"

"They've given us altar wine. I've taken this wine on the steps of the altar, with a congregation trembling at the presence of God." Short breaths cut his words as the wings of a captive bird are clipped.

"A prayer, a passing, a laying on of hands, and this wine becomes the blood of God Himself. I could make it so—I have the power to call down the miracle of God's majesty and make these crushed grapes the selfsame blood that trickled from the wounds of Christ—and you sit there sipping it and asking me— Ah!"

Father Joseph rose to his feet, again the ascetic, ruling, swaying, commanding. She shrank before him.

"Drink the wine—you told me—to steady my hand—see, it is quite steady"—he held it out—expressionless, nerveless. "Drink it, you told me, for the needs of the body. No, no—see, I lay my hands on it and drink it for the needs of the soul."



## ALL WORDS ARE VAIN

ALL words are vain, and when 'tis time to part,  
"Twere better that we leave "Farewell" unsaid.  
Beside the treasure stored within the heart

All words are vain!

For, howso'er we phrases form with art,  
Always the crucial moment finds them fled,  
While through the halting words the hot tears start,  
Bespeaking memories unburied.

Or, when estranged, with empty speech we part,  
Nor language dare deny our Love lies dead,

All words are vain!

W. G. TINCKOM-FERNANDEZ.

# THE ART OF HOSPITALITY



By  
*Constance Smedley  
and  
Pearl Humphrey*



PRATT was on his holiday, and consequent anarchy reigned in the servants' hall. The cook took this opportunity of becoming so insufferably insolent that she had to be discharged at a moment's notice; and the parlor-maid went to bed with a gathered foot. The housemaid, the kitchen-maid, and the page foregathered riotously in the kitchen; and Mrs. Martin, thanking the gods that the stables were not disorganized, drove off to catch the 10:20 on a servant-hunt in town. Nelly, left alone, spent a delicious morning, strumming "The Cingalee," under the name of practising; romping with the dogs "to give them exercise"; reading "From Sea to Sea" as "studying geography"; and otherwise finding dutiful names for pleasurable occupations.

At half-past one, somewhat ruffled after a race with a fox-terrier, in which he had had the courtesy to circle round and round her by way of imposing on himself a handicap, she sat down to a meal of the ascetic kind, which always results from domestic upheavals. Cold ham, cocoa, and cheese were spread before her, when, raising her eyes, she beheld a wagonette loaded with people driving up to the door. Nelly recognized the entire Gerney family, accompanied by some visitors. When the Assyrians came down like wolves on the fold, they must have produced an effect somewhat similar to the sensation experienced by Nelly as she hurried up-stairs into her bedroom, and hastily began to change her pink cotton morning frock for a more careful costume.

Elise had gone up to town with Mrs. Martin, and Nelly could find nothing. She felt positive that the Gerneys, in the drawing-room beneath, could hear her agitated footsteps and the opening and shutting of many drawers, and would inevitably conclude that she was of the type of girl who is unpresentably untidy in the morning. She came to the belated conclusion that it would have been more polite, and in better taste, to have gone down in her pink cotton, even though it had an ink-spot on the cuff.

When she entered the drawing-room at last, flushed and apologetic, and wearing the wrong belt put on crooked, Mrs. Gerney and her party were full of embarrassment. They were sure they were putting her out, and were so sorry. Mrs. Gerney, an old friend of Mrs. Martin, but very slightly known to Nelly, explained that, with their visitors (here she interpolated some mystic phrases which might have been introductions) they had driven over to see the ruins of the castle, and had meant to descend on Mrs. Martin and ask for some lunch, knowing that she kept open house. They had no idea she was away, and could not dream of staying and putting Nelly out.

To this, of course, Nelly demurred. They really must stay; it would give her so much pleasure; and Mrs. Martin would never forgive her if she let them go away. "If you will excuse me for a minute," she concluded, "I will just see that luncheon is served soon."

With these smiling courtesies on her lips, and doubt and despair at her heart, she raced to the servants' hall, where the housemaid was tyrannously presi-

ding over the dinner of the kitchen-maid and the page. "Dressed in a little brief authority," she was haughtily brandishing a carving-knife above a roast loin of pork, when Nelly appeared in the doorway, full of perplexity. She glanced from the pork to the hot sunshine outside, with a rather dubious expression; but she could find no alternative, and bade the disappointed trio dine off cold ham and serve their own succulent dish in the dining-room. Then she fled into the garden for flowers, finding her choice much restricted by the necessity for keeping out of sight of the drawing-room windows.

In the meanwhile, at the end of a protracted half-hour, her guests were becoming stupefied with embarrassment and hunger. They felt that they were an occurrence of much inconvenience to their fluttered hostess, but they could not now leave any more than Nelly could let them go, ardently as she and they all desired it.

Things improved when they were ushered into the dining-room. The table looked charming, with the flowers freshly gathered. Nelly sat at its head, and endeavored to keep the conversation up to the standard usual at Mrs. Martin's luncheons. When the pork appeared, her efforts fell quite flat. It was hot, and the party were tired with sightseeing, and just in tune for sweet-breads or salmon and mayonnaise, or some such dainty. To be offered hot roast pork in such circumstances was very disappointing. Mrs. Gerney, who had a horror of pork in any form, sat with her plate steaming before her, trying to inhale the freshness of the late sweet pea across a barrier of greasy vapor.

"Oh, Mrs. Gerney, I am afraid you don't like it," said poor Nelly. "I am so sorry."

Mrs. Gerney made a heroic effort to eat it, but her spirit failed her, and she murmured that she was not hungry, which was by now the simple truth.

Nelly glanced round the table. The men were manfully plodding through theirs, but all the women were more or less playing with it, and were confining

themselves to bread and the potatoes, which were fortunately cooked as only dishes meant for kitchen consumption are usually cooked. A fitful silence prevailed, broken only by polite voices referring to the ruins they had seen, or the pretty country. Mrs. Gerney saw Nelly's eyes fill with tears of vexation and embarrassment, and she gripped her knife and fork with the air of a grenadier. Nelly's little separate apologies to each person in turn made things worse, for they assured every one that she was watching just how much they did or did not eat. She was feeling very much inclined to jump up and run away when an inspiration came to her.

"Emily," she said to the sulky house-maid, "bring up a bottle of the Burgundy."

The faces lightened somewhat. Mrs. Martin's cellar was the best in the county. Nelly wondered why she had not thought of this alleviation before. But they experienced a relapse into gloom when Emily departed with a terrific bang of the door, and Nelly said in distress: "Oh, how rude of her! The fact is, our cook is away, and this is the servants' dinner. But Emily need not mind—there is plenty of cold beef and ham for them."

"Oh, my dear," said poor Mrs. Gerney, "why didn't you tell us you were without a cook? Of course we should not have dreamed of staying."

"But it is such a pleasure to have you!" cried Nelly. "I am so glad we had anything to offer you, but I wish it had been nicer. I am afraid you don't like it at all."

"It is very nice indeed," protested Mrs. Gerney; and a composite murmur from the others supported her polite mendacity. The reentrance of Emily, bearing a dusty black bottle without a napkin, turned the conversation into happier channels. Nelly, who never drank wine in the middle of the day, watched her guests raise their glasses to their lips, and felt that, after all, things were not so bad. She wondered what Mrs. Martin would say when she heard that a bottle of her best Bur-

gundy had been used; but no doubt she would see how matters had been. Nelly only hoped that they would not finish this bottle and oblige her to send for another. She knew her aunt's wine appealed to the masculine palate. She may have expressed something of mingled hope and fear in her face, for no one took a second glass, in spite of her remark that Emily *could* fetch another bottle if they liked. Nelly's mind became fairly peaceful. The cold fruit-tart disappeared with a rapidity remarkable in contrast to the leisurely vanishing of the pork. But the black coffee, which she had in an undertone requested the surly Emily to make, was so vile that Nelly herself said: "Don't try to drink it!" and launched into further apologies.

She felt that she could have retrieved the honor of the house if her guests would have stayed to tea, but they resisted all entreaties and left immediately. Nelly accompanied them to the door, with final pleas for indulgence; and Mrs. Gerney was at last driven off, repeating mechanically: "Please don't mention it. So sorry to have put you out."

When Mrs. Martin returned, she found Nelly restless, tired, and longing to relate her trials of the day.

"I am glad you gave them the Burgundy," said Mrs. Martin, when she had heard all, "though I think it would have been better to give them a sort of scratch meal. They would have understood. Instead of attempting a proper luncheon, I should have had the cold meat, even though there was not much left, and made them one of your

nice omelets in the chafing-dish. It was very rash to try the black coffee. By the way, did you apologize much?"

"Oh, yes," said Nelly earnestly, "over and over again; in fact, the whole of the time. I assure you, I never stopped!"

"Oh, Nelly! That was the real mistake!" rejoined her aunt. "Don't you remember the definition that apology is only egotism wrong side out? What you ought to have done was to make them feel that they were not putting you out at all, but that you were all having an impromptu picnic, and you were enjoying it. Simplicity is a trump-card in an emergency. But I am sure you did your best, and Mrs. Gerney is an old friend, and will understand. Now, as you say there is some Burgundy left, I will have a glass, and then go and rest till dinner-time."

Nelly took up the wine to her aunt's room, and was just coming away when she was struck by Mrs. Martin's face as she took a sip and then set down the glass.

"What is it? Why don't you drink it?" she asked.

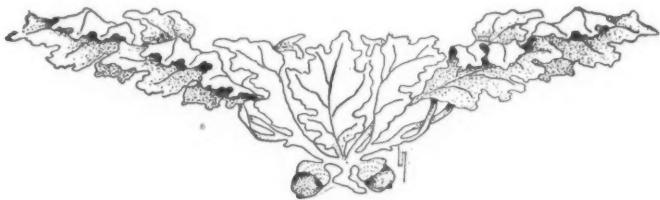
"I will presently," hastily rejoined Mrs. Martin.

But a horrible suspicion was dawning on Nelly's mind.

"It is the Burgundy, isn't it?" she gasped.

Mrs. Martin rose and put her arm round her niece's shoulders.

"Don't worry about it, dear," she said. "It's only another proof that you wished them well. But Emily doesn't know the cellar, and—well, it is cooking claret!"



# PATTY ON THE PALISADES

By  
*Walter P.  
Eaton*



PATTY sometimes says it was my love of alliteration—a love witnessed by the title of this story she has bid me write!—that brought it all about. She reports that I always stand rapt in admiring contemplation before the circus bill-boards, whereon is pictured “Daredevil Diavolo’s danger-deriding, death-defying dive,” or tales are told of “ponderous pachydermic paraders.” This may be true, but it is really not my love of alliteration which causes my contemplation, but my awe at the pyrotechnic verbosity of the passionate press-agent. How I should like to be able to write like that! However, all this is not to the point. I have other matters to tell. If I hesitate, it is not that I forget the task, or think slightly of it, but because I cannot see why it should interest other people. Me it interests tremendously—and Patty. But it is a quiet, rambling tale, and commonplace enough, no doubt, for in this good old world there is nothing so commonplace, thank God! as the love of a man for a maid—though I believe the love of a maid for a man is always a fresh wonder! At all events, Patty will not have it but I must record this tale as straightforwardly as I may, which she doesn’t seem to think will be straightforwardly enough, regarding me, when writing is concerned, as a sort of family dog that runs hither and yon, now into a field, now under a wall, now ahead, now be-

hind, while the family carryall (“your ordinary hack!” I tell her) plods on its even way. In short, I go five miles to cover a half-mile of road. She, of course, always outruns me by going straight ahead. When we talk together, I often find her waiting for me at the end of my sentence. Bless her patient heart, I shall find her waiting for me at the end of this story, having skipped, you may be sure, what fantastic digressions I may be led into. Very like she will be the only reader who is left. Well, that will disappoint her more than me, I’m sure. So, if any reader has gone this far, he had better go on to the bitter end, if he does not wish to give a sweet girl pain!

It will be as hard for me to get to the beginning, however, as for the reader to get to the end. In the first place, I hate a story which begins at the beginning—except “Tristram Shandy”—because the beginning is so far from the real point; and, in the second place, I honestly don’t know where the beginning of this story, Patty’s and mine, lies. Mists of antiquity shroud it (watch Patty’s face, will you, when she reads that!) and it came, even in those remote times, without our knowing it. I will just commence, I think, with a certain April afternoon not very long ago, when I had a bad attack of spring fever, and let all that comes before get itself told as best it may, by parentheses and allusions, and when I don’t know that I am telling it, maybe.

I was a newspaper man, and my family never had any money, either. But

as they have always lived in New England, they enjoy many of the luxuries of life, including social standing and a front yard. When I got through college and decided to make a name in literature via the newspaper route, I came down to New York "to buck the metropolis with a stub pen." Many college youths cherish the delusion that the newspaper route is an L road leading to literary fame. As a matter of fact, it is a subway leading to indigestion, premature baldness, and a Harlem bedroom. It takes the young men about four years to find this out; their youth carries them through two, enthusiasm and grit through a third, and hope dies hard in the fourth. They discover it for themselves (nobody can tell them, of course; if you don't believe it, try!) on the first warm day of their fourth spring in "the business," about the time the bald spot begins to widen on their temples. Then they spend a very bad afternoon with themselves. They invite their souls and curse. Some of them get drunk.

It was the first warm day of my fourth spring in the newspaper business.

I got down to the office at one o'clock, after a bad morning's sleep, for my nerves were going back on me fast from the night grind, the un-Christian mode of life. As I passed through City Hall Park, the fountain was playing for the first time, and the trees had a faint hint of green, like the ghost of a veil caught in their branches. The air was languid, enervating. I took my assignments, went into a telephone-booth, and covered them, or arranged to have them covered by an accommodating friend, and got aboard a Harlem train. I didn't much care where I went; I merely longed blindly to escape somewhere from the load of town. At One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street I decided to take the Fort Lee ferry and cross to the Palisades. The upper deck was almost empty. I stood alone, looking north, as we moved out of the slip.

And I was suddenly conscious that in six months I had not beheld a real horizon. A great weight seemed lifted

off my spirit as I gazed up the level Hudson, past jutting nose on nose of the Palisades, first purple, then lavender, then sky blue, into the misty, radiant expanse of the upper stream. Below I heard the wash of water; about me I felt the wash of air; and, better than all, as we neared the western bank I was conscious not that the ceaseless moan of Manhattan had been left behind, but that a definite, almost tangible silence came offshore to meet me, folded me round. It seemed to me that when I had climbed up the bank I could, in that blessed stillness, hear the very grass-blades push up through the sod. My imagination, which had been dying a slow death in the months and years gone by, awoke and stirred fitfully. I felt power of thought and fancy returning. I faced toward the crocodile jaw of Manhattan Island and cursed it in my soul, knowing at last, I told myself, that if ever my imagination and dreamings were to profit me, it would be when I had forsaken its Babel haste and scramble for the leisure of quieter places, realizing that the man who reports life truly, reports not the doings of the police-court or the market-place, but himself.

Then I went down to the lower deck, to leave the boat. And there, close by the rail, stood Patty!

She did not see me; she was looking idly toward the bank, as if she were deep in her own thoughts and had no interest in her destination. I had not set eyes upon her for two years; I had not heard from her, and seldom of her. Perhaps I fancied I had forgotten her. Between my life in New York and her quiet village existence, where the Berkshires huddle flock on flock into the twilight, there seemed an inseparable gulf. It appeared impossible that could be she in front of me now. Yet I was suddenly conscious of a great gladness that it *was* she. No other soul would I have been glad to greet at that hour of awakening. I came up close behind her.

"Patty!" I said.

She turned, with a little cry, then put out both her hands.



"I was going up on the Palisades to be alone," said I.

"Me, too," she answered.

"Let us seek loneliness together," I smiled.

"Still Prince Paradox," was her reply.

And that was our first greeting after two years, after a parting that had cost us tears and which we had agreed, between our reluctant kisses, should be final! There are moments in life when light words rise to the lips and smiling banter clothes the emotions, though a thousand tides of feeling are surging within. And the light words may be bitter or trembling with a great joy; the tone of the voice, the glance of the eye alone differentiates. My eyes met Patty's, and I knew that she was glad. And she, in turn, tucked her arm suddenly and confidently in mine, and we half skipped off the ferry-boat, smiling into each other's faces.

## II.

"In two long years I have not seen you, nor heard from you, nor known what you were doing," said I, sitting at Patty's feet on a nose of the Palisades which commanded the sweep of the river north and south, and where, in the thin shadow of a budding tree, in silence and peace, one looked down and away on the smoky line of Manhattan, but heard neither its busy clatter nor its undertone of pain.

"Dear me!" said Patty, "you are getting bald. Soon you will be able to get your hair cut without taking off your hat."

"Patty on the Palisades!" I exclaimed, lingering over the phrase. "How funny that sounds, and how funny that you should be here, you of all people in the world!"

"What street are we opposite?" said Patty.

"You of all people in the world," I repeated, "to be here to-day!"

"Why is it so funny?" asked Patty suddenly. "Don't you like me to be here?"

I smiled, looking out across the Hudson.

"It's One Hundred and Forty-fifth Street, I believe," said I.

"I guess I've a right to visit my aunt, if I like," remarked Patty combatively.

"But you have no right not to let me know that you were visiting her," said I.

"I—I didn't know your address," she replied.

"Why is there always a little steamer, I wonder, coming around under a distant headland of the Palisades, just like the picture in the geographies?" I asked, in a tone of polite weariness.

"What would you have thought if I had let you know?" said Patty.

"That you still remembered an old friend," I answered.

"Is that all?" she queried.

"Yes," said I.

"I suppose the steamer is there to prove the geographies correct," Patty remarked indifferently.

"No," said I.

"What else?" she asked, leaning forward a little.

"That you regretted a bit our agreement of two years ago," I answered.

"Do you regret it?" she asked.

"Not when it is enforced this way," I replied, suddenly taking her hand in mine. The hand was not withdrawn for a moment. Patty's eyes sought my face and then half closed.

"But I didn't know," she said; "I didn't know! That is why I couldn't tell you I was here. Don't you understand?"

"I think I do," said I, trying to retain the fingers that slipped slowly out of mine.

There was silence for a space. Some children playing far below us sent up their shrill, clear calls. A bird sang behind us in the wood. The expanse of the Hudson, blue and sunlit, lay shimmering at our feet. My sensations of release, of sudden expansion of soul and fancy, of being embraced with silence as with the Everlasting Arms, that had come to me so strongly on the boat, were almost forgotten now in a

more delicious sensation still—the sensation of Patty's presence beside me. I turned my face away, but awareness of her persisted so strongly that I saw nothing; the long line of Manhattan grew misty to my sight. She stirred slightly, and I turned to her, the mist of joy still in my eyes. We looked at each other a long while so, and in her eyes the mists gathered, too. Again I took her hand, which she did not withdraw.

"Patty," I said, "why did we do it, then, two years ago? Was there any need?"

"I wonder!" said she. "I wonder! I have often wondered, after the first few months had gone by and I began to miss you."

"Did you miss me—much?" I asked, turning away. I almost hoped that she had not, for I was aware my power of regretting had been atrophied, too, in the months behind, and I had not missed her, at least not consciously, as I could have wished now to have done. And yet I passionately desired that she had missed me very much! I think Patty was aware of my mood, for she answered a little sadly.

"Yes," she said, "I think I have missed you more than you missed me. You have been busy, you have been in New York. One forgets a great deal—in New York, I imagine. But I've not been busy, and I've not been in New York."

She paused a moment, and then went on, with almost bitterness in her tone: "Every walk up into the hills, every spot where we used to sit to read, every bit of the old furniture mother used to promise should be ours when—when—they all cried out to me every day: 'What have you done?'"

"But what had you done?" I asked.

"I had cut my anchor-cable," said Patty.

"And I drifted," said I.

"We both drifted, then," Patty replied.

"It was my fault," I went on. "I should never have come to New York, should I?"

Patty was silent.

"Something happened after I came to New York, some influence poisoned our love. It fell sick and died. What was it?"

"I don't know," she answered. "I don't know. Only, you were not the same after you had been in this horrid city for a year. You grew cynical, you seemed to lose your poetry. You had always painted the world for me in rainbow colors, and you didn't any more. I—I was disappointed in you."

I, in my turn, was silent.

"Ah," said Patty, putting her arm about my shoulder, "I have hurt you! I don't doubt it was only my fancy. I had always had you with me. I can hardly remember the time when I did not have you with me. What I was you made me. I grew up almost beside you, and you taught me to think and feel—and love. Then you went away from me, and I began to think and feel for myself, and somehow you seemed to slip away and change, till I didn't love you any more. Don't be hurt, please. It was not your fault."

"I am not hurt," I answered. "I know what you say is true. I've not been what I was, to you or to myself, for three years, until to-day. I dried up, Patty. I went about those cañon streets over there, I slaved far into the night, I never saw the sun rise nor the dew fall, I hurried and cursed and toiled with three million other slaves of the Titan city, until my soul grew thin and wasted, and the dreams died in my heart. I meant to rise in the world, I worked for a name to give to you, I fought for life—and instead I forgot how to live! Can't you teach me how again?"

"Poor boy," said Patty, "do you think I can? I should have stood by you then, two years ago, instead of growing cold and sending you back alone. You will never quite forgive me. It is too late now. You think you will forgive me, but you won't."

"I can never forgive myself," I answered, "for growing cold to you. It takes two to make a quarrel or a kiss. We spoiled our lives together."

Again we looked out in silence over

the gleaming river. I do not doubt we might have presented a most melancholy spectacle to the two whom we saw slowly approaching along the path. They, however, paid no attention to us, being oblivious to the world. The girl wore a white shirt-waist, and as they passed on into the woods we noticed a black band appear suddenly across this white background. Then their faces met.

"I believe he kissed her!" exclaimed Patty.

"What an excellent idea!" said I.

"And two years ago we agreed never to see each other again," said I presently. "And two minutes ago you said it was too late to——"

But my mouth was suddenly sealed.

"Patty," I said, "it isn't polite to interrupt."

"I was hungry," she retorted penitently, "and we've no bread and cheese, so I had to take the third part of the feast."

"But you didn't have to steal it," I replied, and I believe I showed her why.

Patty paused as we began the descent. The shadows of the Palisades were cast far out over the river. At another time they would have reminded me that I was already late in reporting to the office. On the farther shore a thousand windows blazed with fire from the sinking sun, like gleaming eyes. I stood a few steps below her, looking up.

"I shall go home and write a poem called 'Patty on the Palisades,'" I said. "I've not written a poem in two years. It will be my 'Angel in the House.'"

"Please put my confession in it, then," said Patty.

"Your confession?" I queried.

"Yes," said she, her eyelids drooping. "Patty came to the Palisades to-day to decide if she should tell you she was in New York."

"What would have been the decision?" I asked.

"I came to New York because I knew what it would be," she replied.

I retraced the steps I had descended. I am sure the windows on the farther

shore winked. Even Manhattan is human at times.

Patty's aunt, I should like to add, did not scold us for being late to dinner. But I had a bad ten minutes over the telephone with my city editor. He was an unimaginative creature, anyway, with one of those disagreeable things called a sense of duty.

### III.

His merits in her presence grow  
To match the promise in her eyes,  
And round her happy footsteps blow  
The authentic airs of paradise.

That is not part of my poem to Patty on the Palisades. I am not going to quote my poem, so do not worry, Gentle Reader. Mine really isn't a bad poem, though! Patty says it is a very good one, in fact; but, of course, she is naturally prejudiced. You would be surprised, I am sure, if I did quote it, to see what a poetical name Patty is. At first blush it might not seem, to any one who never knew the lady herself, a name that would fit in the catalogue of the "five sweet symphonies." Perhaps it hardly would fit there. Patty is not a symphony; it is an "Invitation to the Dance." It is not, to be sure, a name that rhymes well—I told her I should have to rime it with "fatty," and a chilly two moments ensued. But it trips along in the middle of a measure most quaintly, and seems to make a charming little *moue* at you every time it occurs.

No, the poem I have quoted from is by one whose bays are immortal, even if to-day they seem a little faded in the world's eyes. It was in 1856 that "The Angel in the House" first appeared in America, with a blank on the title-page where the poet's name should have been. It was printed by Ticknor & Fields, and I found a copy of that first two-volume edition, in the familiar brown binding of the firm, as I was walking down Cornhill, in Boston, where they still have book-shops. The two volumes had been cut, and the name Coventry Patmore neatly written across the title-page of each book. Numer-

ous passages had been marked in the text, which "meandered through a meadow of margin," inviting such pauses by its brink. The ancient owner of the book had evidently sat him down by the quatrain I have quoted, for there was a triple mark beside it. I sat me down with him, and thought most kindly of him, and wondered who his Patty was, that he knew the mood so well.

It never occurred to me, of course, that he was probably reading this poem for the first time and discovering gems of verse with the disinterested enthusiasm of the poet-taster; that he might have been a college professor, or an old man, or some other uninteresting thing. It remained for Patty to suggest this possibility when I took the book home to her. It's curious how practical women get after they are married, as I told Patty. She replied by informing me that I was an old goose, a statement that, so far as I can see, has very little to do with the question, whether it be true or not. However, I was too wise to argue, and later in the day I came upon Patty reading the books. I fancied that she had been crying softly.

"What is it?" I asked, leaning over her.

She closed the volume.

"To-morrow I'll show you," she said. "To-morrow, you may possibly remember, is the second anniversary of what you call your emancipation day, and of the day you found Patty on the Palisades."

"The two are the same," said I.

"Your old friend who owned these books was a dear, after all," was her reply.

That evening we grew reminiscent, walking in our front yard (for we now have that luxury) under the soft spring stars. Across the broad, elm-lined road, in the Allen house, the girls had company. The windows were open, and the sound of laughter and music came across to us. Between the Allens' and the big, colonial homestead beside it was a gap through which our eyes wandered out over an open expanse where we knew the Deerfield River ran, to

the long, low line of the hills beyond. The lustrous evening star now hung like a lamp on this shadowy ridge. The air was fresh and fragrant. Behind us, in our own nest, which boasted its hundred years of occupancy, the cozy light from a red-shaded lamp streamed out through the climbing rose-bushes on the porch. Patty nestled close to my side and drew a deep, contented breath.

"Don't you wish you were back in New York?" said she.

"New York?" said I. "Where is that?"

"It's a place," she answered, "that's mostly full of newspapers and noise."

"I hate both," said I.

"But quite close to it are some nice things called Palisades?" she queried.

"Oh, yes, I remember them!" I answered. "But they are like heaven in the hymn—you have to cross a river to get there."

"The fare is only five cents," said Patty.

"The other place is free," I retorted.

"Unless you're a millionaire," said she.

"Which, praise God! I'm not," was my reply.

"You've done pretty well, though," said Patty, with a smile—"at least, since you left the newspaper profession."

"Trade, Patty, trade!" I sternly corrected. "How many times must I warn you against that mistake?"

Patty giggled.

"Silly boy," she said. "Why are you so bitter against newspapers and New York? We had such a lovely time for a whole year in that little flat on Eleventh Street, and a nice newspaper paid for it. And you wrote the Dream Book there, most of it after you got home at night. I used to lie awake and hear you scratch matches. I always knew when the words were coming easy, because then you had to scratch a lot of matches, your pipe went out so often."

"I wrote the play there, too," said I, "and a newspaper paid for the scribbling pads. But that's no plea for newspapers nor New York."

"Why?" said Patty.

"Why?" I exclaimed. "Why didn't I write the Dream Book and the play in the four years before we had that little flat on Eleventh Street?"

"Well, why didn't you?" she asked.

"His merits in her presence grow  
To match the promise in her eyes,"

I quoted.

"Was that what Mr. Patmore meant?" asked Patty innocently. Then she grew serious, and crept within my arm, as the music from the Allens' parlor floated out through the rich dusk.

"Tell me truly," she said, "would you have written the Dream Book and the play two years before you did if I—if we, dear—had not deserted each other? If I had come to live with you then, would there have been two beautiful, golden years added to our lives? Oh, dear heart, if those two years are lost, how can I ever forgive myself?"

I kissed her eyes in the darkness, and they were wet.

"Listen," I said. "In those two years alone, face to face with the giant city, a slave of a great machine, I learned what every man who is a man must learn sooner or later, and what nobody else can teach him. I learned that God works from within outward, that all really fine creative art is born of silence and meditation, that no man speaks truly who does not speak himself. For silence and meditation my life gave little chance; starlight and still spaces, the large leisure of nature, were not for me, and I am enough of a poet to need them. And when I spoke at all it was always with the mouth of the machine. Myself I never uttered, not realizing that was all that mattered. If you had come to me, instead of parting from me four years ago, the Dream Book and the rest would not have been written so soon, perhaps never. I should have learned my lesson more slowly with you walking beside me, 'the authentic airs of paradise' blowing about your feet, and when I had learned it, it might have been too late to mend. And, dear, I'm afraid you might have caught cold from those drafts about your ankles!"

"What do you mean?" asked Patty. "Only this," I answered. "A woman's body and heart and soul may be the same, but a man's are not. While my body and heart were yours, you would have seen my soul wrestling with a problem you could not share, you would have felt a half of me not to belong to you. Your happiness would have been clouded, for you would have discovered that in spite of you I was not happy, that you were not enough to complete my life. That discovery would have made you unhappy, wouldn't it?"

Patty drew away from me a little.

"It would have killed me," she said, in a voice so low I could barely hear it above the sounds of the piano across the road. "Why is it different now? Oh, it is different now, isn't it?" She finished with a little cry.

There come moments to every man, I suppose, when his own unworthiness of the love of his wife is brought sharply home to him, when it seems almost incredible that *he* could have won a love like hers. Such moments he treasures as the dearest, the most sacred, of his life, never to be recalled without a resurgence of that wave of tenderness and self-abasement which swept over him then. I folded Patty quickly in my arms.

"Sweetheart," I said, "my lesson had just been learned at last when I found you on the Palisades. God sent you at that moment to complete my life; you were the one thing I needed then to make me whole, and the only thing I shall need now as long as life lasts. I had found my soul again, and you brought me back my heart. And now you have them both in your keeping, for, since I have found them, neither one nor the other is of any care or interest to me except as it pleases you."

The sound of the piano had ceased, and the hush of night had crept down from the hills and up from the intervals when we turned toward the house.

"You must go in and work," said Patty. "You know you've got to read the first act of the new piece to Mr. Frothman next week, and it's far from done yet."

"I don't care," said I. "I don't want to work to-night."

"Yes, you do," she answered sternly. "Come in this minute!"

"Stern daughter of the voice of God," I sighed. But I went.

When we entered the library, however, Patty took up "The Angel in the House."

"Dearest," she said, "before you go up-stairs, see what a nice man your old friend was, and what he has marked in this book."

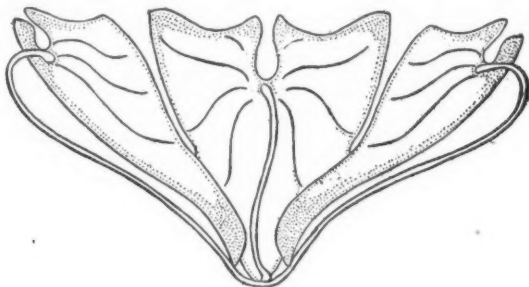
And she pointed to a passage I had not discovered in turning the yellowed leaves, Patmore's version of the *Pervigium Veneris*:

'Twas when the spousal time of May  
Hangs all the hedge with bridal-wreaths,  
And air's so sweet the bosom gay  
Gives thanks for every breath it breathes,  
When like to like is gladly moved,  
And each thing joins in spring's refrain,  
"Let those love now, who never loved;  
Let those who have loved love again."

Against the last line he had written in a firm but tiny hand: "And love where they have loved before, since in all the world there is no love so sweet as that which hath been lost and is found again."

"See," said I, "here is a spot on the paper, too. It looks like a tear-stain."

"It is a very old one," said Patty. But she did not look at it.



## THE CITY'S VOICE

THE multitudinous, deep undertone  
That rings and sings from city street to street,  
Which makes a music out of many feet  
And harmony of sound from laugh and moan,  
How mighty in its volume has it grown!  
In range how infinite! In voice how sweet!  
For, to my ear, the whole world is replete  
With joyousness and gladness like my own.  
I hear the new-made mother's laughing cry;  
The shouts of children; manhood's keen debate;  
The lad's entreaty and the maid's reply;  
The reasonable rejoicing of the Great.  
Strange! Thus to hear, through my own happy sigh,  
The joy of millions made articulate.

RHODA HERO DUNN.



# The CHARIOT of FATE



By *Joseph C. Lincoln*



HE placard was ready. Fashioned from the pasteboard cover of a hat-box and suspended by a loop of white tape, it proclaimed in somewhat blotted capitals: "Board and Lodging for One. Inquire Within."

Mary Dawes, an ink-smooch on her pretty nose and another on her white apron, was holding it aloft for Aunt Hephzibah's inspection. Aunt Hephzy herself, arrayed in her "go-to-meetin'" gown and the bonnet with the pink roses, was viewing it through her spectacles.

"You done reel well, Mary," she declared. "It looks most as good as if we'd paid Solon Tuttle a dollar for letterin' it. A dollar! the very idea! 'That's less than three cents a letter, ma'am,' he says, 'and I'll have to tote it a mile or more up to your house besides.' 'Well,' says I, 'the United States Gov'ment'll tote a letter from here to San Francisco for two cents. I declare, I don't see what you wanted to be postmaster for, Mr. Tuttle,' says I. He didn't seem to know what to make of that, and I marched off and left him thinkin'."

"I wish the pasteboard hadn't been so soft," observed Miss Dawes. "It soaked up the ink dreadfully."

"Never mind. Ink's cheap, thank goodness. Now you hang that sign in the front parlor winder. You'll have to open the blinds, but you'd better keep the shade down or the carpet'll fade,

and we've scarcely got mats enough to cover the shabby places as 'tis. I cal'-late the Jones man'll be along this mornin'. They told me a week ago that he was comin' to-day, and the depot master promised to send him up. Show him the room, tell him he can have hot water every Sunday mornin', if he wants it, and that we have breakfast at seven o'clock week-days. And don't you take a cent less than four dollars a week. It's been some time since I had to feed a man, but I know how they eat."

Her niece promised faithfully to stick to the figure named, and Aunt Hephzy went out to the barn, where Maud, the white mare, was already harnessed to the carryall. Both mare and carryall had been in Aunt Hephzibah's possession fifteen years, and both were decidedly second-hand when she bought them. Maud was fat and wheezy and lame. As for the carryall, its ancient box body was secured to the springs by weight alone, for the bolts connecting the two had long since rusted away.

Maud, being aroused from her slumbers by the flapping of reins and a series of chucks and "git-daps," moved languidly out of the yard and along the sandy wood road toward the village. Aunt Hephzy was on her way to the store. She heard the distant whistle of the morning train, and, farther on, met a young man, evidently a stranger, who was carrying a valise. He was a good-looking young man, and Aunt Hephzy sniffed when she saw him. Then she fell into a reverie.

Every one in Wellmouth knew that for men in general, and for young men in particular, Hephzibah Dawes had no liking. Solon Tuttle said she was "the everlastin'est dried-up old maid on the Cape," and his opinion was that of the majority. She had arrived in the town from nobody knew where, and at once bought the little house on the Neck road that the heirs of Captain Elisha Payne had advertised in the county papers for sale. There she lived alone for five years, and then departed, to return with a young girl who turned out to be her niece, Mary Dawes, from Bethlehem, New Hampshire. From Mary the gossips learned that the girl had never known she possessed an aunt until her father's death, when Hephzibah had suddenly appeared, announced the relationship, and her intention of adopting the orphan.

Aunt Hephzy had brought up her niece in a peculiar way. Other girls attended parties and were escorted home by young men. Likewise they went to prayer-meeting, while their beaux waited on the fence outside. Mary never went to parties, and when she attended prayer-meetings, her aunt was the escort. At high-school hops Aunt Hephzibah, enthroned on the settee by the wall, rigorously inspected her niece's card and took it on herself to decline all offers except those of married men or very ancient bachelors. The minister was the only masculine caller at the Dawes homestead. It was distinctly understood that no young man need apply; otherwise there would have been plenty of applicants.

The card in the window had been devised because an addition to a limited income was desired, and Aunt Hephzy had been told by the chairman of the school-committee that the new teacher, whose name was Jones, was an elderly widower who wished a good boarding-place. Being elderly, he was, therefore, harmless, according to Aunt Hephzy's reasoning, and she had laid plans to secure him as a boarder.

Aunt Hephzy, thinking of these and other serious matters, jogged on to the store. Meanwhile the young man with

the valise walked leisurely up the Neck road, past the scattered houses, cranberry-bogs, and clusters of pitch-pines, until he reached the whitewashed fence in front of the Dawes house. There he saw the placard, hanging between the shade and glass of the only unshuttered front window. Evidently it was what he had been looking for, for he opened the front gate, its long-unused hinges squeaking in protest, and strode between the box hedges up to the front door. Then he stood upon the step, with the scraper at its edge and the big sea-shells, inherited relics of the deceased Captain Elisha, on either side, and tugged at a glass-knobbed bell-pull.

It was some time before his ring was answered. At last, however, he heard doors banging and the sounds of footsteps approaching, apparently, from the extreme rear of the house. Then bolts clanged, a big key squeaked, and the door opened.

There was a perceptible interval before the young man raised his hat. He seemed very much astonished, as though he had expected to meet a different person. Mary Dawes, too, seemed astonished. It was apparent that she expected a different sort of visitor.

"I—I," began the young man. Then, turning very red, he snatched the hat from his head, and said hurriedly: "I—I—beg your pardon. I—I— Is this Miss Dawes?"

"Yes, sir," replied Mary, also reddening.

"Well, I saw the sign in the window, and, as I'm looking for a room and board, I——"

"I'm sorry," interrupted the young lady, blushing more than ever, and extremely provoked at herself for doing so. "I'm sorry," she went on nervously, "but there is but one room, and that's spoken for—that is, it's engaged. Well, not engaged exactly, but——"

"Is that so?" exclaimed the applicant for board, picking up the valise and putting it down again. "You see, I saw the card, and—er——"

"Yes, I know. But the room is spoken for."

"I'm very sorry to hear it. I really am." He certainly looked as if he were. "And I don't understand—I beg your pardon—this is Miss Dawes' house, isn't it? Miss Hephzibah Dawes', on the Neck road?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I was told by the station-agent that you had a room, and that you would undoubtedly take me in. In fact, he sent me here, and——"

"I'm sure I don't see why he should. He knew we were holding the room for the new teacher, and——"

"But I'm the new teacher."

Miss Dawes' face expressed the greatest astonishment. Was it possible that Aunt Hephzibah had reformed? Was this up-to-date, well-dressed young gentleman the person she had referred to as "the Jones man"? It didn't seem possible, and yet——

"Oh!" she exclaimed, in confusion. "I beg your pardon. Walk right in, Mr.—er—Jones. You see, I didn't—that is, we didn't—my aunt said—Do walk in."

The new teacher walked in and deposited the valise on the floor of the dark and stately front hall. He caught an indistinct picture of old-fashioned wall-paper, a black walnut hat-rack, and a hair-cloth chair. These, however, were of no importance just then. From the station-agent's casual remarks he had expected to meet a portly maiden lady of middle age. Instead, here was this decidedly attractive young woman of not more than twenty-one. She had called him "Jones," but that wasn't strange. He was used to being hailed as Jones or Brown or Robinson by people who had heard his name but once.

"If you'll step up-stairs," said Miss Dawes, "I will show you the room."

The room was large and old-fashioned and sunny. The bed was a four-poster, covered with a gorgeous "rising sun" patchwork comforter.

"There's a feather bed here now," said Mary, looking at the four-poster. "Perhaps you would prefer a mattress. If so, I'm sure you may have it."

The prospective lodger, looking not

at the four-poster but at the young lady, declared that he liked a feather bed above all things. Also he said the room was charming. Miss Dawes seemed pleased, and went on to speak of the hot water on Sunday mornings. This being satisfactory, she mentioned the fact that it was a rather long walk from the house to the school.

The teacher vowed that he liked long walks, especially in the spring and summer. This led up to a discussion of the beautiful weather, and the weather as a topic of conversation is inexhaustible. They went down-stairs to the sitting-room, and it was a full twenty minutes before Miss Dawes remembered to speak of board.

"We have breakfast on week-days at seven," she said. "That's very early, of course, but——"

"I like early breakfasts. Seven isn't at all inconvenient. I'm sure I shall be entirely satisfied with everything, and, if you are, we'll call it settled."

"But I haven't told you the terms. My aunt said that she thought we should charge four dollars a week. That may seem a little high, perhaps, but——"

"Not at all. Very reasonable, I think."

"Well, of course, Aunt Hephzibah arranges that. She——"

"I beg pardon. Aunt Hephzibah? Then you're *not* Miss Dawes?"

"Yes, I'm Mary Dawes. Oh, I see! how funny! You thought I was Aunt Hephzy. No, indeed; I'm her niece. Auntie will be back soon. Why, here she comes now!"

From the yard without sounded a squeaking of rusty axles, and a vehicle that to the pedagogic's eyes seemed to be a sort of Noah's ark on wheels rocked past the window.

"That's Aunt Hephzy coming now," explained Mary. "She'll be in just as soon as she unharnesses the horse. Or perhaps you're in a hurry; shall I call her?"

"Oh, no, don't call her. I'm in no hurry at all. Really, I——"

He was interrupted by the banging of the kitchen door. A moment, and

Aunt Hephzibah, majestic in the Sunday gown and the beflowered bonnet, stalked into the sitting-room. She gazed upon the pair in silence. Evidently she had not waited to unharness the horse.

"Auntie," said Mary hurriedly, "this is the—the new teacher. He likes the room very much, and he says——"

Aunt Hephzy held up a plump hand adorned with a black net mit.

"Jest a minute," she said. "I heard somethin' about this at the depot, and I come home to see about it. Young man, you ain't the teacher that was expected, are you?"

"Why—why—I suppose not. That is—er—I was offered the position only three days ago. The gentleman who was to take it changed his mind at the last moment, and I——"

"Yes, so I understand. Mary, didn't I tell you the room was engaged for a Mr. Jones?"

"Yes, auntie, but this gentleman's name is Jones."

"It is? Well, that's surprisin'. I s'pose he's some relation to the other one. But it don't make any difference. I'm sorry, Mr. Jones, but——"

"Excuse me," broke in the visitor. "I fear there has been some mistake. My name isn't Jones. You see——"

The niece interrupted him. "Why! *why!*" she cried. "I'm sure I thought it was. I called you Mr. Jones, and you——"

"It don't make any difference," said her aunt, with decision. "If it was Nebuchadnezzar 'twould be all the same. The room was for Mr. Jones, and *the* Mr. Jones it was for was a different man. I'm sorry, but you'll have to go somewhere else."

The young man rose to his feet. He was evidently astonished and a little offended.

"Miss Dawes," he said, "I confess I don't understand this. My references are of the best; I *am* the new teacher; the room suits me, and I was given to understand that I might occupy it. Just because my name happens to be Smith——"

"*Smith!*" Aunt Hephzibah screamed it. Her round face turned white, and she fell into a rocker. Her niece sprang to her side.

"What is it, auntie?" she cried. "Oh, what is it?"

Aunt Hephzy pushed her away. "Did I understand that your name was *Smith?*" she gasped.

"Yes, John Smith. Really, I——"

"That settles it. Please go away, and go now. Mary, open the door."

The bewildered Mary did not obey, and her aunt opened the door herself.

"Good mornin', sir," she said.

"But——"

"Good mornin'."

Mr. Smith picked up the valise. Slowly he walked to the door.

"I don't understand, madam——" he began.

"You ain't got to. *Good mornin'.*"

The door closed. Aunt Hephzy returned to the rocker.

"My soul and body!" she panted. "*Smith!*"

"Well!" exclaimed Mary. "I must say that the way you have treated him and——and me, is——"

"Be still, child! You don't know what you're talkin' about. *Smith!* And he wanted to live in my house! Mary, don't you speak to me for another hour."

John Smith walked down the road, his mind in a whirl. He had a vague idea that the stout woman with the pretty niece was a lunatic. Mary retired to her room to shed tears of mortification. Aunt Hephzibah sat in the rocker for minutes. Then she went in search of the ink-bottle and the brush. Passers-by that evening noticed that the placard in the Dawes window had been changed. It now read: "Board and lodging for one woman. Inquire within."

## II.

From the end of the April vacation to the first of September isn't a long time, as time is reckoned, but a good many things may happen in that interval. The important thing that didn't happen was the letting of that room. It

remained vacant until the latter part of August, and then Aunt Hephzibah took down the placard.

"There ain't been but three women to look at it," she explained to her niece. "Two of 'em I wouldn't have 'round no more'n I would a poll-parrot, and t'other ain't got a red cent, and owes all creation. I cal'late we'll give it up. That—that"—she would not speak the name—"that teacher critter sickened me of the bus'ness, anyhow."

Mary said nothing; she deemed it extremely unwise to refer to the "teacher critter." Therefore, instead of replying, she left the room in order that her aunt might not see her face. She had met Mr. Smith that afternoon on her way to the store. The meeting was quite by accident—their meetings always had been quite by accident, at the store or the post-office, or somewhere along the "short cut" to the village—and Mr. Smith had spoken very earnestly. He was going away next day; going back to Boston to continue his studies at the medical college. His summer school-teaching had been only a makeshift to help pay expenses. The term ended in July, but he had remained—for a short vacation, he said. Now he was going, perhaps for good. That "perhaps" was very important. He was coming to the front gate at nine o'clock that evening—Aunt Hephzy retired at eight-thirty—to talk further concerning it.

The day was unusually long. At four in the afternoon Hephzibah harnessed the new horse—Maud was now the "late lamented," having stubbornly refused to live beyond her twenty-fifth birthday—and drove carefully and timidly to the village. The new horse, bought a week before of Mr. Tuttle, who warranted him one that a blind cripple might drive with two fingers, had shown symptoms of shying, and Aunt Hephzy was nervous. When she returned to the house at supper-time, her niece saw at once that something was the matter.

"What is it, auntie?" she asked in alarm. "She—it didn't run away, did he?"

"No," snapped Aunt Hephzy. "Is supper ready?"

It was, and they sat down to eat it. Mary tried in vain to open the usual avenues leading to conversation. She tried the sewing-circle, the minister's latest sermon, and even the new baby at Gideon Bangs'; but it was of no use. Her aunt answered only with a yes or no, and simply would not talk. Worse still, she ate almost nothing. Mary was worried; also, because of certain misgivings, a little frightened.

The dish-washing ceremony was performed in silence. Then, as usual, the pair adjourned to the sitting-room. Mary took up the tiny jacket she was crocheting for the infant Bangs. Aunt Hephzy's knitting, however, lay untouched in the work-basket; the lady herself sat in the rocker, her eyes closed behind her glasses, and her fingers nervously twisting a corner of the Cape Cod *Item*, which lay in her lap.

Eight o'clock struck. Suddenly Aunt Hephzy sat erect in the rocker.

"Mary," she said, "put down your work, I want to talk to you."

The little jacket fell to the floor. Miss Dawes looked at her aunt. Then she looked at the fallen jacket; also she turned red.

"Mary," said Aunt Hephzy, "when I was up to town this afternoon, I heard somethin' that's upst me dreadful. Somethin' that I wouldn't have b'lieved if it hadn't come so straight I couldn't help b'lievin' it. How far has this affair between you and that doctor-teacher or teacher-doctor, or whatever he is, gone?"

Mary's redness had disappeared. Now she was white; but she answered bravely.

"I don't know what you mean by 'affair,'" she said. "I have met Mr. Smith"—her aunt shivered at the name—"several times since he was—was insulted here at this house. I must say—"

"Hum!" interrupted Aunt Hephzy. "How many times is 'several,' 'cordin' to your count?"

"Well—well, I don't know. Perhaps eight or ten, or—or—"

"I see; or twenty-five. All right; go ahead."

"None of the times was by appointment," protested the young lady indignantly. "I have been down-town for the mail, or on other errands, and he—he has happened to be there, too, and we've talked occasionally; about his school, and—and such things. Mr. Smith is a perfect gentleman, and——"

"Why didn't you tell me that you'd been meetin' him? Not leave me to hear from other folks that you two was engaged, or jest as good."

"We're not engaged," declared Mary. "Whoever told you that was just trying to make trouble. Oh, I *hate* the people in this town!"

"Never mind the people. Why did you keep it from me?"

"Well, you treated him so badly when he was here that—that—There really wasn't anything to tell, anyhow."

"I see. Mary, I've come to think as much of you as if you was my reel daughter, and I jedged you thought pretty nigh as much of me. You've noticed that I've never let you go round with young men, same as these other girls in Wellmouth; well, there was a reason for it. Now I'm goin' to tell you the reason, and it's somethin' that—now that your pa is dead and gone—nobody but me on earth knows. Mary, my name ain't been Dawes all my life."

"Hasn't been Dawes? Why, auntie! What do you mean? You are father's sister, aren't you?"

"Yes, but I callate your pa never mentioned my name while he lived, did he? I thought not. Yes, I was born Dawes, and Dawes I stayed till I was twenty. Then I ran off and married a—well, what 'peared to be a 'perfect gentleman,' like your teacher man."

"Married? You married? Who was he? What was his name?"

"He was a cigar drummer from Providence, that I met to a dance up in Bethlehem. And he was handsome, and had fine clothes. And his name"—Hephzibah leaned forward to emphasize the forthcoming disclosure—"his name was Smith."

"Why! why, auntie!" faltered Mary.

"Smith was his name. He spelled it with a Y, *S-m-y-t-h*, but folks called him plain 'Smith.' Well, pa and all of our folks didn't like him, but I ran off and married him. I had some money of my own then—left to me, it was—and he knew it. Well, for eight years I was Mrs. Smyth, and—— Never mind; jest let's say that the idee of Tophet hereafter ain't scart me much sence—I've been through a wuss one. He drank and he stole, and he gambled away my money. Maybe I could have stood them things, but there was others. He beat—— Well, we won't talk about it. I was too proud to git a divorce, or to let folks know how things was by leavin' him. Finally he died; fell under a train; been drinkin', I s'pose likely. Then I went to work dressmakin', takin' my own name again, and saved a few dollars. Everybody had died of my own but your pa, and he didn't know where I was. Then I see this place advertised for sale in a Boston paper, and thought 'twould do for me to hide myself in, so I come here, saw it, and bought it cheap."

"After awhile the lawyer in Bethlehem wrote me your pa was dead and about you. I went and got you, and you've been here ever sence. But I made up my mind you shouldn't ever go through what I did. Bein' an old maid is heaven alongside of it. When that—that teacher man said his name was Smith, I pretty nigh collapsed. It seemed like I was fated to be chased by Smiths all my life. And now I I'arn from other folks that my niece, almost my daughter, you might say, is meetin' this Smith man two or three times a week, and keepin' it from me."

"But, auntie, he isn't a bit like your—your husband. Everybody likes him. I know all about him. His mother is living, and he writes to her every day. He is going to be a doctor, and——"

"I can't help it, Mary. His name's enough to fix him in my mind. I don't want to be selfish, but it's got to come to jest this: If you want him you can't have me. I've tried to be a mother to you, but—well, you must choose be—



twixt us. I've had Smith enough to last me, though. You can think it over to-night, and let me know. I understand he goes away to-morrow, anyhow, and that, I guess, is a mercy. Good night, my—my dear."

She followed this unwonted term of affection by coming over and kissing her niece on the forehead. Then she went to the dining-room, returned with a hand-lamp, said good night once more, and went up-stairs.

Mary sat alone and thought. For awhile she could think of nothing but her aunt's story. Then she thought of other things, and cried, drying her eyes with the crocheted jacket.

Nine o'clock struck. From the road without sounded a low whistle. Mary heard it, and sat up in her chair. Then, in a flash, came over her the remembrance of her aunt's kindness, and what her own life might have been without the eccentric old lady's care. She owed so much to Aunt Hephzy. How could she desert her now?

Minutes passed. The whistles sounded at intervals. By and by they ceased. Mary took up the lamp and went to her room to think and sob until morning.

Meanwhile, Aunt Hephzy, in the big front chamber, had been fighting that unreasonable thing, a conscience. Reason as she might that she was entirely right and unselfish, that conscience of hers stubbornly said no. She heard the whistles, and, raising a corner of the shade, peeped out. Then she went back to bed, to get up at intervals and peep again. Soon she heard her niece ascending the stairs.

### III.

John Smith also spent what promised to be his last night in Wellmouth most uncomfortably. He had returned to the Central House, where he lodged, in a frame of mind divided between anger and despair. She had promised to be at the gate and hear the very important statement he had to make. She was at home, because she never went out of an evening unless her aunt went with her. The aunt was at home and

in her room up-stairs, because he had seen her shadow on the curtain before the lamp was extinguished. Why then? Why? He could think of but one reason why, and that was the cause of his despair. He realized that nothing, future prospects nor professional career, amounted to a continental if that reason was the true one. He resolved to try again before taking the train next day.

So, on the following morning, he once more strode along the Neck road bearing his valise. Turning in at the well-remembered front gate, he rang the glass-knobbed bell.

Mary answered the ring, just as she had done on his former visit. And, just as before, she seemed surprised to see him; surprised and very much agitated.

"Mary," he began hurriedly, for he expected to hear Aunt Hephzibah's footsteps at any moment, "I waited for you last night, and you did not come. I couldn't go away without seeing you, so I came here this morning. I——"

"Mr. Smith," she interrupted nervously, "I—I mustn't see you again. Please go away. Auntie——"

He misunderstood her. "You yourself are the only one who shall prevent my speaking," he declared. "Your aunt has no right to allow a prejudice against me to——"

"Please go," she pleaded. "I wish you to."

He looked at her in amazement. "You wish it?" he repeated. "Mary, do you realize that I am leaving town to-day, and that whether I return or not depends on you? You *must* hear me."

"No, no!" she exclaimed. "I mustn't. Please go. I ask you to."

"Do you mean that you want me to go away for good?"

Without looking at him she nodded.

Hurt and offended, he drew himself up.

"Oh! very well," he said. "I understand. I shall not trouble you further."

He was turning away when, from the driveway behind the house, came the squeak of wheels, the same that had once before announced to him the coming of the chariot of fate. And there,

on the seat of that chariot, the antique carryall, sat fate itself, in the ample person of Miss Hephzibah Dawes. Aunt Hephzy's eyes took in the situation, or she thought they did.

"Good mornin', sir," she said, and her tone was diplomatically cordial. "I was jest hopin' some man or other would happen along to help me out of a scrape. I've got to drive to town, and I'm scart to death of this new horse of mine. You're bound for the depot, I s'pose? Would you mind drivin' me down? I'll git Seth Eldredge's boy to fetch me back."

Probably Aunt Hephzibah's company at that time was the thing furthest from John Smith's wishes. But where fate—a female fate—commands, who dares disobey? He announced himself as charmed, and moved toward the carryall. With his foot on the step, he turned.

"Good-by, Miss Dawes," he said, raising his hat. His face was very white.

"Good-by," said Mary, also very white.

"If you don't mind," observed Aunt Hephzy, "I'll move onto the back seat, long's you're goin' to drive."

Mr. Smith didn't mind, and the change of seat was affected. The curtains of the carryall were buttoned down, and in the gloomy shades of the rear section Aunt Hephzibah loomed indistinctly like a majestic idol in a grotto.

"Get up," commanded the driver. The carryall squeaked and rocked out of the yard.

Aunt Hephzy offered no remarks, and Mr. Smith did not speak. For some distance they progressed in silence. Then they entered the narrow road just before the turn, where there were no houses, and the high, sandy banks on either side were covered with clumps of pitch-pines.

Up to this point the new horse had behaved very well. He moved faster than the much mourned Maud had been wont to do, but he had not shied. Now, however, just at the narrowest part of the road, a newspaper which Mr. Smith

had thrown away on his walk down that morning came whirling before the wind around the curve. It danced and flapped and crackled. The new horse jumped and stood on his hind legs. The carryall reeled, and Aunt Hephzy screamed. Worse than all, the worn leather reins, as old as the vehicle itself, parted just at the buckle, and fell beneath the animal's feet.

"Mercy on us!" shrieked Hephzibah. "What shall we do?"

"Whoa, you idiot!" shouted Mr. Smith. "Stand still, will you!"

But the horse wouldn't stand still. He continued to rear and prance. Then the ex-schoolmaster did a very foolish thing. Instead of jumping to the ground, he stepped over the dashboard, and, clinging to the harness on the horse's back, with one knee on the shaft at the side and the other by the whiffletree, he essayed to pick up the trailing reins.

The added weight on the shafts was the only thing needed to complete the mental upset of the horse. It reared again, and wheeled around. The carriage rose on two wheels and began to upset. Aunt Hephzibah lost her balance and collapsed against the downward side. Another moment, and the whole upper half of the carryall, box body, seats, curtains, and Aunt Hephzy, tilted over the lower wheels and slid with a thump sidewise upon the soft and sandy road. The bolts between the floor and springs being gone, there was nothing to hold the two sections together.

A great cloud of dust arose and covered everything. Out of it burst the galloping horse dragging the four wheels and the springs, while clinging tenaciously to its back and yelling frantic "Whoas" and exclamations, was an erstwhile dignified young gentleman by the name of Smith. The horse, the wheels, and Mr. Smith tore back up the road toward the Dawes house. From the dust-covered curtained heap behind came smothered ejaculations and screams for help.

The new horse, while not precisely the sort for "a blind cripple to drive

with two fingers," was not overburdened with spirit. By the time he reached the Dawes driveway he was tired, and willing to be rid of the kicking, tugging creature on his back. Into that driveway he dashed, and pulled up with a jerk in front of the barn door. Mr. Smith promptly fell off, sat up on the clam-shell drive, and gasped for breath.

The kitchen door banged, and Mary Dawes came running from the house.

"Oh! oh!" she cried. "John! John! are you hurt?"

Mr. Smith dazedly replied that he guessed not. The young lady promptly fell upon her knees beside him, seized him about the neck, and frantically begged to know if he was sure. Upon his answering in the affirmative, she dropped her head upon his shoulder and burst into tears.

"Oh!" she sobbed. "I was sitting by the window, and saw that dreadful horse go by with some one on his back. I couldn't be sure it was you, because I had been crying so that my eyes were——"

"You were crying? Why? Why?"

"Oh, because you had gone away. That is, I mean——"

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Mr. Smith, and clasped her in his arms.

There was more of this, perhaps five minutes more. Then John Smith fell out of paradise with a thud.

"Great Caesar's ghost!" he shouted, and sprang to his feet.

"What is it?" asked Mary, also descending from the clouds.

"Your aunt! She's back there in the road shut up in the top of that carriage!"

They met Aunt Hephzy walking slowly home, escorted and surrounded by a group of women and children, and three or four masculine neighbors.

"Where's that dratted horse?" demanded Hephzibah. "Is he dead?"

On being informed that the animal was alive, she declared that she was glad of it for one reason.

"I jist want to see Solon Tuttle," she said. "He'll either take that critter

back or eat him, one or t'other. You see."

"Are you hurt, auntie dear?" asked Mary anxiously.

"Hurt? No. Nothin' but my feelin's. But I'd like to have had that Tuttle man shut in that carryall top with me while I was sprawlin' in that road. He'd have been hurt."

Then she looked at Mr. Smith and her niece.

"You'd better be gittin' on," she said sharply to her former driver. "You've got to walk now, and you ain't got any too much time to make your train."

"Here's your valise, mister," remarked a small boy. "I fetched it for you."

The "teacher critter" took the proffered valise. He was dusty and disheveled, but for good and sufficient reasons it was best that he should take that train. He turned to Mary.

"Good-by, dear," he said. "I will be down again next Sunday. And you'll write every day, won't you?"

Mary's cheeks were very red, and she did not look at her aunt. But she answered without hesitation.

"Yes," she said. "Good-by, John."

A kiss, and Mr. Smith was on his way to the railway-station.

"Well! Well! I never in my life!" gasped Aunt Hephzy.

The rest of that day Mary spent alone. Her aunt did not care for dinner, and ate a light supper in solemn silence. The girl was very sober and downcast. She loved her aunt, but her course was determined now. They must part, it seemed. She sat in the rocking-chair that evening and pondered sadly.

Suddenly Aunt Hephzy entered the sitting-room and stooped over the back of her chair.

"Mary," she said chokingly, "I'm afraid I've been a dreadful selfish woman, but you know—— There! Lord bless you, dearie, and make you happy. Thank goodness he don't spell it with a Y, anyhow."

# At the Last Stand

BY LEWIS WORTHINGTON SMITH

THERE were three of them caught in the dark defile, "The Kid" and Smiley and Hale,

And back of them clamored the painted Sioux with arrows that would not fail:

And each one summoned his surest hope, the bravest trust of his heart,  
His soul called out on the wings of death with never a fear or start.  
For each went back to his lifelong faith. "The Kid" pledged heart and hand  
With oaths to the devil and hell-let-loose, the gods he could understand.

And Smiley, clutching his shooting-iron, and thinking still of the mine,  
Whose wealth should have made him a millionaire ere his life's ease-rich decline,  
Cried out for the power of a purse well-filled and the men it could buy at need  
To fling at the outcast dogs of earth, the sons of a savage breed.  
His soul sprang up in its last great reach—not to Christ with a wild demand—  
But to gods of the mart and the crowded street, the gods he could understand.

And Hale, who had mused, as a brave man may, on the false gods, old and new,  
The gods who have led man up the slope to the heaven-embracing view,  
Bade his heart be still, now the end had come, and the courage to brave it well  
Was the only god that could save our dust from the utter depths of hell.  
He cried to the pitiful god of self, the god of the faltering hand,  
The god one may worship a whole life long and never once understand.

So Smiley and Hale and "The Kid," all three, passed out to the rayless dream,  
And neither the devil and hell-let-loose, nor the god that is gold agleam  
Let down from the place of glittering stars sure paths for their feet to tread.  
But less than they, was the god of self, as his worshiper tumbled dead;  
For the god of courage to face the truth, however it bless or brand,  
Is never so near at the hour of need as the gods we can understand.

From the thousand gods of the stream and wood, the wind and the rising sun,  
The sweep of the years has pushed us on to a doubtful faith in one;  
But law of the atom and law of the mind and law of the dauntless heart  
Are woful gods for the hour of need when the soul and body part.  
We pray, let Him come whom our yearnings shape, let Him lead us by the hand,  
The pitying God, the time-tried God, the God we can understand.

# A CHRISTMAS DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

By  
*Elizabeth Banks*



ALWAYS at Christmas time Mary Ann Jenkins had given to each of her women friends a piece of toilet silver marked "sterling" to help along their "collections," which at this particular season they were wont to discuss most enthusiastically in her hearing.

They, in their turn, always remembered her with cards of loving greeting or with handkerchiefs—ever useful—and when Mary Ann was thirty-three years old she had ninety-eight unused seven-cent handkerchiefs, and a hall bedroom papered with Christmas cards.

All her life Mary Ann had longed for a silver-backed hairbrush. When she brushed her hair it was with a common wooden thing that precipitated bristles over the top of the combination washstand-bureau-dresser, which took away all the real joy of hair brushing, and it was therefore easy for her to go to bed with unbrushed hair.

She longed, too, for a cut-glass, silver-topped powder box. The celluloid box with its warped lid insulted her soul, and in her rebellion she sometimes allowed her face to go all unpowdered and shiny on the warmest days.

She often looked remorsefully at her untended finger nails, but her broken-handled nail file and rickety scissors made manicuring a torture. Josephine Monroe, her companion stenographer at the law office, always had pink-tinted, shiny, almond-shaped nails. It was to

Josephine that Mary Ann had given a beautifully embossed, sterling-handled nail polisher bearing the monogram "J. M."

Ever since she was eighteen years old, when she was thrown parentless and homeless upon the world to earn her own living, Mary Ann, upon her gradually increasing salary, from seven to twelve dollars a week, had managed to provide herself with all of the absolute necessities, and none of the luxuries, of civilized woman's life. She bought ten-cent cotton undervests, three-for-fifty-cents fast-black stockings, heavy muslin nightgowns, with a band of imitation torchon around the high neck, a year back style shirt-waists at the July sales, and "greatly reduced" ready-made skirts and jackets in Fourteenth Street.

And all the while her very soul panted after fine lisle or silk vests; transparently thin silk stockings; surplice-shape nightgowns with ribbons drawn through them; lingerie shirt-waists of the hand-made variety, and skirts and jackets that rustled with silk linings.

Often in the evenings she sat before the unattached oval mirror, with its five Christmas cards stuck in variously to hide the breaks, and wondered what must be the happiness of a woman with silver spread out before her on an open-work bureau scarf, and then she would pass a hand through her stringy hair and sigh.

She had no desire for jewels, carriages, great dinners, balls, immense

wealth or unlimited power. She aspired only to her woman's birthright—daintiness of person and attire.

And every Christmas she spent thirty dollars of her carefully saved money for Christmas presents for her friends and distant relations.

Mary Ann was born on the nineteenth of December, and it happened on the day that she was thirty-three years old that her employer, always kind and thoughtful for his employees, told her she could have the afternoon off for Christmas shopping. She went forth with her thirty dollars and the list of the presents it was to buy—twenty cents for one friend; fifty for another; one dollar for her cousin three times removed; seventy-five cents for Josephine Monroe. She remembered that Josephine seemed to have everything now for her "collection" with the exception of a glove-buttoner.

It was her intention to buy all the silver articles she had on her list at one counter in Sixth Avenue, where she had noted marvelous reductions, and in her search for a suitable glove-buttoner her eye caught a hairbrush with Cupid designs, marked down to \$3.98.

"It is lovely, isn't it?" ventured the saleswoman. "And the bristles are warranted. If you were thinking of a brush for any of your friends, you won't find another one like this in all New York."

"I wasn't thinking of a brush," answered Mary Ann, turning her eyes away and fumbling among the many small pieces that were bunched together in a tray. She found a glove-buttoner for forty cents, and crossed off Josephine's name. Next came a shoe-horn for Emma Neibling; a buttonhook for Ellen Daskam; a nail polisher for Sarah Winter; then a vaseline box with thin sterling top; cold-cream jar; tiny silver-mounted perfume bottle; nail file; nail scissors; silver-handled whisk broom; small bonnet brush with long, stemlike handle; sterling-mounted, imitation tortoise-shell comb; glove stretchers and curling tongs.

Down the list she went, crossing off the names as their owners were pro-

vided for, and then, it being dinner time, she went to her boarding house, having so far spent fifteen of her thirty dollars' Christmas fund.

After dinner, sitting beside the evil-smelling gas stove by which her room was heated, she unfolded her purchases.

"How lovely they are, all together!" she said; then, suddenly: "I'll spread them out on the bureau overnight."

She removed the washbowl and pitcher, threw the wooden hairbrush on the bed, and arranged the silver pieces in front of the glass. They reflected back in doubles and filled the sordid little hall room with glory. Mary Ann's eyes feasted upon them, grew large, grew brilliant. In the excitement of admiration her cheeks took on a glow of pink, and a lock of her hair, not in a string but in a wavelet, fell over her forehead.

She continued to look with shining eyes and open lips. "How lovely they are, all together!" she repeated, and then she thought of how little consequence each piece would really be by itself when in the possession of the particular friend for whom she intended it.

"Thirty-three, and wanting them all these years!" she murmured; then suddenly, fiercely: "I will keep them myself!"

The next morning she stood outside the Sixth Avenue shop, waiting for the doors to open, at eight o'clock. At the silver counter she bought the Cupid-embossed hairbrush, a hand mirror to match, and made up thirteen dollars by the inclusion of a cut-glass and silver powder box.

"Mark them all with the monogram 'M. A. J.,'" she said, producing the smaller pieces she had bought the day before, and at nine o'clock she was at the office clicking her typewriter in company with Josephine Monroe.

On Christmas Eve the hall bedroom was transformed into a bower of beauty. With a dry-goods box and some dotted swiss she had made a dressing table whereon to spread her present to herself, a complete set of toilet silver. A bedspread of dotted swiss over pink, and a pillow sham to match, made the



one-time ugly bed a couch inviting to sweet slumber and sweet dreams. The walls had been stripped of their cards of loving greeting. They had been cleaned with bread crumbs and sent off to wish a merry Christmas to the astonished Josephine Monroe and her coterie, some of whom, also, received handkerchiefs from Mary Ann's large collection by which her friends had been remembering her for ten years past.

Then began a new life for Mary Ann Jenkins. Every night now the silver-handled brush did duty by her hair till it took on a sheen and sparkle, and glistened all auburn, though once so dully brown in the sun. Daily she filed and rubbed her nails till with their half moons they shone like mother-of-pearl. Nightly, with the silver-topped whisk, she brushed her skirt and spread it carefully out, that it might not wrinkle. With cold cream from the box of dainty lid she massaged her forehead, round her eyes and round her mouth, till indentations ceased to be. With the little savings she made each week—savings which always before she had added to her Christmas fund—she began to purchase gradually such toilet requisites as a rubber complexion brush, a half dozen Turkish wash cloths, good soaps, toilet waters, hair tonic, tooth brushes from which the bristles did not fall into her throat and choke her, talcum powders, all the more soft and refreshing because of their inclosure of silver and cut glass.

And when the winter had gone and June was come, she bought herself a lingerie shirt-waist, soft and sheer, with lace and open work; and at the ten-cent store she bought a tiny iron, with which she surreptitiously ironed it after its laundering in the wash bowl.

She was not naturally a good sewer, but she possessed the genius that is

born of taking pains, so with practice she learned to take tiny stitches in the garments which she cut by paper pattern, till one after another she laid the dainty muslins in her bureau drawer with tissue paper spread between them, knowing not that she was making her wedding trousseau.

Often she patted the smoothness of bewitching waist or bodice; often she dwelt with loving fingers on lace and ribbon. Yet, arrayed in their fineness and standing before the glass, she realized not that she had grown beautiful, but that she was happy.

The months passed, and in their passing they made her not older but younger, for, with its going, each month had left her some little gift which was hers by right in girlhood and had but delayed its coming. Such simple things they were, indeed! A ribbon of particular shade; a girdle of peculiar cut; a glove of silk instead of cotton; a stocking of transparent lisle; a slipper with a shining buckle; and, finally, the crowning glory, a skirt with a silk dust ruffle.

And then one night she stood before the silver-decked dresser and peered with surprised eyes into the looking-glass.

"He says he loves me! He says I'm beautiful—I, Mary Ann Jenkins!"

Then she picked up each piece of silver and kissed it right on the monogram "M. A. J.," and it seemed to her that they all began to jingle, oh, so sweetly; oh, so merrily, and that they were wishing her many happy returns of the day!

For it was again the nineteenth of December, and her birthday.

"I have been born again and have come into my own!" she said, stretching out glad hands to the radiance of the mirror.



# THE QUEST

BY BEATRICE  
HANS COM



R. HENRY HORTON, standing just inside the vestibule of the Church of St. James the Less, was irreproachably sabbatical in his attire, as befitted a junior warden; but his mind

was not lulled to a Sabbath calm, and his temper was distinctly the temper of Monday morning with Tuesday imminent as a bank holiday, and several feminine depositors insisting on having their bank-books made up *at once*.

It was a sultry Sunday morning, and Mr. Horton's frock coat felt heavy. His standing collar, artistically fretted here and there by the Clarion Steam Laundry, sawed insistently at the back of his neck.

These were, however, mere minor annoyances.

"The very—dickens—seems to be in people this morning," Mr. Horton communed with himself.

Nor did it occur to him logically that if his hypothesis was correct, those so possessed were pursuing quite the proper course in hastening to a place where the exorcism of evil spirits might reasonably be expected.

"You can't seat 'em to suit 'em," Mr. Horton murmured savagely, gazing gloomily down the well-filled middle aisles, only to encounter the baleful glance of a venerable and vinegary dame attired in rusty black and coiffed by a bonnet appropriately adorned by a raven.

Mr. Horton had just carefully con-

voyed her, as a stranger in the parish, to a desirable seat midway from the chancel to the entrance door.

She beckoned to him imperatively with a black-cotton-gloved hand; and on his approach announced tersely that it was "terribly drafty," and she guessed she'd sit forward, after all.

That in her exit from the pew, she should have stumbled over an ottoman, causing the raven to assume a rakish pose quite at variance with his normal aspect; and that she should insist upon clinging to Mr. Horton's arm until he deposited her in the third seat from the front; that little Miss Silverman, viewing their progress, should have given way to a surreptitious giggle—all these things were additional pin-pricks of exasperation to a man whose patience was already worn to the vanishing point: first, by "resorters," of whom the town of Clarion had begun to have quite a number, who had pointedly expressed a preference to being seated "a little farther front" or "a little farther back," or *anywhere* save in the one seat which Mr. Horton suggested; and, second, by the regular pewholders, who adjured him in whispers, as they passed him, to remember that Sarah was coming, and that would fill the pew, or that Aunt Jane would be late, but she would surely be there, or that, yes, there would be room for one, but not to put in any dreadful little boy like the one last Sunday, who *actually* wiped his feet on your dress and snuffled distractingly. It was very strange that *some* people always got

that kind in their pew, and though, of course, one expected to be good-natured, *still*—

Mr. Horton, taking a deep, warm breath in an unoccupied moment after his return to the vestibule, regarded himself as an up-to-date Christian martyr, an attitude curiously incompatible with the distinctly pagan vengeance he was preparing to wreak on the steam laundry on the following morning.

It was then that so bulky a shadow spread itself upon the vestibule floor that Mr. Horton supposed, for a moment, that the sun had gone under a cloud.

He looked up, to see an old man standing timorously in the outer door.

He was neatly, though shabbily, dressed. It was obvious that the clothes were his best, and equally obvious that he was uncomfortable in them. His iron-gray hair curled crisply, and his blue eyes had a childlike quality curiously at variance with the great top-heavy figure, unmistakably that of a seafarer. His hands were gnarled and knotted, with the veins standing out loosely. His attitude was mingled of hesitation, of hope, and of a shyness that felt itself an intruder.

Inwardly Mr. Horton groaned.

"He's probably deaf, and the only seat left forward is Mrs. Maney's, and she'll take it out of me," he meditated ruefully.

However, the orders given by the Reverend Robert Winthrop, the rector of St. James the Less, concerning the treatment of the stranger and the humble, were extremely explicit. All such visitors were to be welcomed and made at home.

The Reverend Robert had said that while he wanted to see richness lavished on the church service, he wanted also to see poverty made comfortable in its pews, a remark which made his senior warden, Mr. Abner King, a practical business man, regard him with much the same air as that with which Littimer used to survey David Copperfield, remarking: "Indeed, sir, but you're young." But in the parish of St. James the Less, the word of the

Reverend Robert was law. This was the more phenomenal in that the vestry had been accustomed, during an oftchanging succession of rectors, to vary dictation with discharge.

That the Reverend Robert, young, virile, handsome, and *unmarried*, should have captivated Clarion, was not so remarkable; but that after his promptly and totally falling in love with Miss Edith Carter, and persuading that winsomely worldly young woman to become the wife of a country clergyman—then, that the Reverend Robert, *married*, and to a city girl whose frocks were the admiration of all Clarion, should still keep on dominating his Clarion parish in the broad, sane, strong, good-humored way, which held every man to the best there was in him—this caused the vestry first to marvel, and then, rejoicing that they had a man who could "draw," to boast.

So if the junior warden groaned inwardly, outwardly his bearing was carefully cordial.

"Would you like to be seated forward or near the door?" he asked courteously.

The old man waved his hand toward the farthest seat back.

"Somew'eres out of the way like," he said humbly, and the meekness of his tone came oddly from the great, unwieldy figure standing with feet planted firmly and far apart, blocking the entrance door.

"Looks for all the world as though he was expecting a northwester," commented Mr. Horton to himself, as he showed him deferentially to the rear seat.

Into its secluded security the old man subsided gratefully, and the junior warden, with a sigh of relief, turned to conduct Mrs. Abner King punctiliously to her own pew.

Mrs. King considered that, as the senior warden's wife, this was invariably due her, and she always came at the last second before the beginning of service, so that the full congregation might have the benefit of her entrance.

The Reverend Robert had spent even

more time than usual upon his sermon for that Sunday.

He glanced over the closely written pages with a sense of satisfaction as he stood in his study just before church-time.

Mrs. Robert, who cherished an unflinching conviction that all his sermons were masterpieces, regarded him smilingly from the doorway.

"Is it a gem?" she inquired gaily.

"It's scholarly, for once," said the Reverend Robert convincingly. "It's the sermon I wanted to write, written as I wanted to write it. People need plain truths more than they do erudition, and generally I do try to give them what they need, but to-day I've indulged myself for once. If they can't grasp it, it will be good exercise for them to stand up and reach."

Mrs. Robert laid her daintily beheaded head against his shoulder.

"Is it beyond *me*?" she inquired, and her tone savored more of amusement than awe.

"If there's anything too high or too deep for you, I've yet to find it out," he confessed lightly, slipping an arm around her waist with an accustomed deftness. "I can't touch the boundaries of that marvelous feminine mind of yours. And how it ever allowed itself to be persuaded that its proper career was to act as clerical consort, is a never-to-be-explained mystery."

"I trust the results are satisfactory," said Mrs. Robert demurely.

If the Reverend Robert remembered the old New England Blue Law which forbade a man's kissing his wife upon the Sabbath day, he did not govern his conduct by any bygone Puritanic legislation.

As he followed the choir into the church, his mind was content.

The boys were singing the processional remarkably well; they marched rhythmically; and the sermon on which he had spent himself with joyous zeal—why, he would *make* them follow him understandingly—he would lift them along by sheer force to those heights where he had been pacing so happily.

He glanced over his congregation with the zealous interest he felt in each and every one of them.

How good it was that so many of the familiar faces were present—eyes in whose glance was the recognition of a sympathetic bond. How much he was beginning to know, both of their small troubles and their great!

And the strangers—his look welcomed them. Out from the chancel went the clear gaze from pew to pew, to the rear seat at last. There it paused, absorbed by the intuition of need which came to him from the bulky, gray-haired old seaman who leaned forward with tense eagerness. How his eyes appealed!

As if in answer to that appeal, the Reverend Robert read the service, only to find after each prayer, after collect, epistle, and gospel that the seaman's wistful, insistent gaze still held unwavering and unsatisfied.

"He's looking for something he doesn't find in the service." The Reverend Robert's mind carried this as a second line of thought to the spoken word. "His eyes are the eyes of a man who is searching painstakingly, diligently, but unavailingly. I must help him."

The choir were finishing the hymn.

The Reverend Robert walked over to the pulpit and unfolded his sermon.

There it was, the work of a clever brain tuned in accord with spiritual things; the symbolic beauty of old doctrines, the parallels that showed scholarship, here and there a quoted thought whose beauty of wording was immortal melody; he had lavished much of his delicate best, that he loved, upon those closely written pages.

But the seeking eyes maintained their gaze. What had he for their soul-hunger?

"Oh, Christ, who walked upon the waters to comfort thy disciples," he prayed inaudibly, "grant that I, thy servant, may carry comfort to this seafarer to buoy him up in his hour of trouble."

He laid aside the little pile of manu-

script. Its place and time were not here.

The missionary spirit caught at his heart-strings and lifted him from the plane of an intellectuality that longed to shine, to a zeal that burned to minister.

*"And so he bringeth them unto their desired haven."*

His clear, strong, sympathetic voice gave the text as it came into his mind involuntarily.

Simply and earnestly he dwelt upon the loving care of God, not as a vague Omnipotent Power, but God the Father, who, watching over us with comprehending sympathy, knows our desires, sees our struggles and our vague gropings, recognizes that even as children, we set our hearts on small and intimate things, and so guides us by the force of His love not only to the greater heaven He has prepared for us, but to our own little haven, the home of our hopes and our heart's desires, which not He in His infinite wisdom would call trivial since His children crave them.

As he had read the service for that one tense auditor, so he preached for him alone; and yet, though the rest of his audience were thrilled and swayed by that true eloquence that comes from the heart, the Reverend Robert knew that, after all, he had missed his man.

The simple, direct gaze, with something of the primitive intelligence of childhood, had held unfalteringly, wistfully, vainly.

As the recessional swept choir and rector toward the door of the robing-room, the Reverend Robert saw the old man shake his head in a patient despair.

He hurried to the entrance door as soon as the final prayer was finished. The old man had disappeared.

The junior warden reported that according to custom, he had asked him to come again.

"The old fellow shook his head and said: 'He's a good man, but I didn't find what I was lookin' for.' Off his head, probably," he commented. "He

heard the best sermon he ever heard in his life, Mr. Winthrop," he added enthusiastically; and the glance he gave the young rector was ungrudgingly admiring.

The sermon had brought Sunday at last to the soul of Mr. Horton, and made him temporarily oblivious of the fretfulness of things.

"No sermon is good if it doesn't give a man what he wants," said the Reverend Robert steadily. "Unless it reaches his especial needs, it's a failure. I wish I might have had a chance to speak to him."

He turned, with a sigh, and strode off toward the rectory.

The junior warden was not troubled with imagination, but even he observed the sudden lassitude of dejection apparent in the poise of the Reverend Robert's shoulders, before the rectory door closed with a click.

"If he'd only be satisfied to save the regular parishioners," Mr. Horton murmured to himself, "but he wants to help all creation. I was a chump not to keep my mouth shut about what the old duffer said."

"Probably didn't know what he *did* want," he muttered, working himself into a grievance. "It was what the rest of us wanted, anyway; and if you can suit *this* parish, and a lot of traveling hay-feverers, it ought to satisfy any man. Yet Mr. Winthrop goes off discouraged."

Something about the ninety-and-nine drifted across Mr. Horton's consciousness. "Of course," he answered the suggestion hastily, "but that isn't business." A criticism that in weekday affairs would have been final.

The buzzing murmur of the outgoing congregation was punctuated by certain definite conversational dots.

Mrs. Abner King, carefully selecting the best-dressed woman among the strangers, extended her hand in condescending greeting.

"We are glad to welcome you to St. James the Less," she said, with the majestic affability that seemed to go with

the creaking at the seams of her best black silk. It was a manner which moved the meek to a feeling of motelike remoteness, and the frivolous, alack! to mirth. "Yes, Mr. Winthrop is a very gifted young man. *We* are perfectly satisfied with him." Which was, of course, the very highest known praise.

Mrs. Robert had stopped to assist the vinegary old lady into her archaic cape. The black-cotton-gloved fingers had fumbled uncertainly at the fastening.

"I'm much obliged," said the old lady grimly. "Young folks are mostly too busy to help their elders. You've got a good minister. You're his wife? You don't look much like a minister's wife. Your pa must have means. I wish you'd tell me if my bonnet's crooked. It's felt queer all the morning."

"Just the least tiny bit," said Mrs. Robert comfortingly, rejoicing at her opportunity to restore the raven from his dissipated lurch, back to conventionality. Her fingers were deftly busy for two seconds.

"There!" she said smilingly; which is the feminine assurance of well-being.

The acidity of the old lady's expression faded, as she looked at the trimness and daintiness of Mrs. Robert's attire, and felt the charm of that young matron's eyes.

"It's a pity more of 'em *haven't* got wives like you," she said dryly. "Thank you, my dear."

Her voice softened surprisingly on the final word; so surprisingly that the raven, now impeccably erect, had the glassy stare of polite stupefaction.

Mr. Abner King pressed the junior warden's hand firmly as he passed.

"A very satisfactory collection," he said impressively. "*Very* satisfactory indeed."

The Reverend Robert stood at his study window watching the tangle of ships in the harbor.

A boat whistle blew warningly.

"I wonder," said the Reverend Robert slowly, "if he is going out at that signal—unsatisfied."

It was Monday morning, and the Winthrops were at breakfast.

Mrs. Higgins had just brought in the second instalment of pop-overs with a conscious pride.

In the days when she had been housekeeper for the Reverend Robert alone, she had considered that her work-hardened, middle-aged life had flowered into an unlooked-for happiness; but now that she had the two of them to work for, to care for, in the dual meaning of the word, the days bloomed into undreamed-of happiness as she lavished herself in loving service.

Mrs. Higgins' cooking was famed, and this morning, as she viewed the delicious, crispy, yellowish-brown distension of those, her latest artistic creation, she experienced that felicity which comes to each of us in those rare and precious moments when we feel we have raised our own standards.

"Mrs. Higgins, these are not pop-overs; these are balloons," stated the Reverend Robert, scrutinizing them closely. "No. They are really pop-overs," he announced. "And to think that other people really fancy they know what pop-overs are," he went on, selecting one of apoplectic build which threatened to topple off the plate from sheer vertigo. "In many homes, on this beautiful Monday morning, people are serenely eating a soggy imitation of these, when they ought to be prosecuting the friend who gave them the recipe." He smiled across the table at Mrs. Robert.

"And speaking of coffee," he said genially, "when Hebe poured the nectar forth, she always poured two cups, didn't she?" His tone was persuasive, and the eyes that met the eyes of Mrs. Robert were the eyes of a man very much in love.

As he had explained to her at length several times during their six months of married life, he was quite unable to get used to the blissful fact that she



really belonged to him, because, he assured her, he was always discovering another new and fascinating specimen in her delightful collection of moods.

To which Mrs. Robert's full red mouth curved in a subtle amusement which the Reverend Robert found adorably provocative.

To know when to be strong, when to be weak, when to be capricious, and when to be reasonable, does, in truth, comprise woman's Highest Education. Mrs. Robert had graduated with honors. She knew the theory of Appropriate Alternation, and how to demonstrate it.

The Reverend Robert was a lucky man. He realized it now as she gazed into the coffee-pot with an apparent intensity of interest which suggested that the visible supply was a question of world-interest.

Then she nodded at him.

"Your mythology is undoubtedly correct, Bobby," she said laughingly. "The nectar still holds out to pour. Did Hebe always put two lumps in the second cup?"

"Hebe was rather inattentive," he assured her; "and she'd fall off Olympus for envy if she could see you."

"Hebe must be the name of some girl who was always askin' him to supper, in the parish before this, I s'pose," Mrs. Higgins meditated. "It's their way. It did seem 's though every unmarried woman in Clarion wanted to see him eat, one while."

The telephone rang sharply, and the Reverend Robert rose to its summons. "Yes?" he said alertly. "What? The old man who was at church yesterday? Badly hurt? I'll come at once. Good-by."

"It's a call from the hospital," he said, as he turned from the phone. "A bad accident. That old sailor who sat in the rear seat—the man that I didn't reach— Perhaps I can—yet."

Mrs. Robert slipped from the table, and was beside him in the hall as he caught up his hat.

"Of course you will reach him," she said, with conviction. "I'm coming a bit later—as soon as he's had his talk

with you—to see if there's anything I can do that he'd like— Good-by."

She sped up the stairway to exchange her absurd little high-heeled slippers for walking pumps.

Mrs. Higgins in the deserted dining-room gazed upon the pop-overs with the eye of gloom. Michael Angelo, finding Pope Julius no longer anxious for the completion of his tomb, Vanduyck, when King Charles abandoned the idea of having portrayed the history of the Order of the Garter, could have understood her emotion.

"I almost wish they had been soggy," she murmured dejectedly, "so long as they're to be wasted."

The nurse met the Reverend Robert in the hospital hall.

"It's a question of an hour or two, at most," she said quietly. "It happened at that bad curve, and he didn't see the train coming. He asked particularly for 'the young minister from the church on the hill.' He has something on his mind, I think. I'll let you see him alone."

The heavy figure lay curiously inert in the clean white bed; but the eyes that had held the Reverend Robert the day before were still seeking.

"It's good of you to come, sir," he said simply. "'Twon't be long. What you said yesterday was good, too. That the Lord will give a man what he wants, when it's time. That was it, wasn't it, sir?"

"Yes," said the Reverend Robert. His tone was very tender. It was a childlike intelligence that was appealing to him.

"But if he hadna been a church-going man?" the question came timidly.

The Reverend Robert took one of the big gnarled and knotted hands, pitiful in its departed strength, and held it in his warm, strong grasp.

"Remember, that God is your Father," he said. "Just explain your mistakes to Him, and it will be all right."

The tired old blue eyes looked at him trustingly. "I suppose you know, sir," said the old man simply. "It's your business. Maybe you can find what

I've been lookin' for. I've been a sailor, sir, since I was a lad of eight; since mother died. I've not been as bad nor as good as some. I let the churches alone. But there's never been a storm when it looked as though we wouldna make the harbor, but I've prayed the prayer she taught me, as much as I could remember it. I don't know what it means. It's just the sound seems to be right, somehow. And lately I've wanted to hear it again—all of it. I've gone to churches here and there and listened, but I can't find it, sir—and I wouldna ask for fear the folk might laugh—at it. Maybe you know it. It begins: '*Pater Noster*—'

He glanced anxiously at the Reverend Robert. His look had the pathos of a hope long deferred; till hope was well-nigh gone.

Tears stood in the Reverend Robert's eyes.

"Man! Man!" he said; and his voice throbbed with a tenderness which made it vibrate with the melody of rich organ notes. "You've prayed the most beautiful prayer in the world all your life long. There are many different ways of saying it; but it's the one great perfect prayer. It asks God *your* Father to keep you safe from danger, and to give you every day not only bread, but whatever you need; it tells Him that you know that because He is your Father, He will do what is best for you; and that, trusting Him, you know everything will be all right. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir, and thankee"—the old voice was dragging now, and the eyes were very tired—"but it's the *sound* of it I'm hungering for, sir."

The Reverend Robert was not afraid to let every man be saved in his own

way. He slipped to his knees. "We will pray it together, just as your mother taught it to you," he said tenderly. "*Pater Noster qui es in coelis, sanctificetur nomen tuum,*" he began; and the old seaman, with a satisfied sigh, murmured the words after him happily, though his voice grew fainter as he went on.

"—*sed libera nos a malo. Amen,*" finished the Reverend Robert; and there was silence in the little room.

The door opened quietly, and Mrs. Robert stood in the doorway. The wide-open window in the hall back of her flooded the room with the radiance of the morning. She had hurried over, hatless, and the incoming breeze ruffled her brown hair lightly on her forehead, as she stood on the threshold, her eyes alight with that protective tenderness which is the finest essence of womanhood. Her simple white morning frock was outlined against the background of blue sky; and the forward impulse of her poise, held momentarily in check, gave to her an ethereal buoyancy.

Whether the sweetness of her face called up to the old seaman's mind the memory of a face to which love had lent beauty in his childish sight; or whether, at the end of his long voyage, a presence unseen by other eyes came down to the shore to meet the wanderer, it is not ours to know.

But he smiled suddenly, and happily, as a child.

"I've found it!—*mother!*" he whispered; and sighed softly, and was still.


The Reverend Robert put his hand gently over the rested eyes.

"Into that haven," he said tenderly; and the peace of the benediction filled the quiet room.



# COMPLIMENTS SEASON *of the*

By  
*O. Henry*

 HERE are no more Christmas stories to write. Fiction is exhausted; and newspaper items, the next best, are manufactured by clever young journalists who have married early and have an engagingly pessimistic view of life. Therefore, for seasonable diversion, we are reduced to two very questionable sources—facts and philosophy. We will begin with—whichever you choose to call it.

Children are pestilential little animals with which we have to cope under a bewildering variety of conditions. Especially when childish sorrows overwhelm them are we put to our wits' end. We exhaust our paltry store of consolation; and then beat them, sobbing, to sleep. Then we grovel in the dust of a million years, and ask God why. Thus we call out of the rat-trap. As for the children, no one understands them except old maids, hunchbacks, and shepherd dogs.

Now come the facts in the case of the Rag-Doll, the Tatterdemalion, and the Twenty-fifth of December.

On the tenth of that month the Child of the Millionaire lost her rag-doll. There were many servants in the Millionaire's palace on the Hudson, and these ransacked the house and grounds, but without finding the lost treasure. The Child was a girl of five, and one of those perverse little beasts that often wound the sensibilities of wealthy parents by fixing their affections upon some vulgar, inexpensive toy instead of upon diamond-studded automobiles and pony phaetons.

The Child grieved sorely and truly, a thing inexplicable to the Millionaire, to whom the rag-doll market was about as interesting as Bay State Gas; and to the Lady, the Child's mother, who was all for form—that is, nearly all, as you shall see.

The Child cried inconsolably, and grew hollow-eyed, knock-kneed, spindling, and corykilverty in many other respects. The Millionaire smiled and tapped his coffers confidently. The pick of the output of the French and German toymakers was rushed by special delivery to the mansion; but Rachel refused to be comforted. She was weeping for her rag child, and was for a high protective tariff against all foreign foolishness. Then doctors with the finest bedside manners and stop-watches were called in. One by one they chattered futilely about peptomanganate of iron and sea voyages and hypophosphites until their stop-watches showed that Bill Rendered was under the wire for show or place. Then, as men, they advised that the rag-doll be found as soon as possible and restored to its mourning parent. The Child sniffed at therapeutics, chewed a thumb, and wailed for her Betsy. And all this time cablegrams were coming from Santa Claus saying that he would soon be here and enjoining us to show a true Christian spirit and let up on the poolrooms and tontine policies and platoon systems long enough to give him a welcome. Everywhere the spirit of Christmas was diffusing itself. The banks were refusing loans, the pawnbrokers had doubled their gang of helpers, people bumped your shins on the streets with red sleds, Thomas and

Jeremiah bubbled before you on the bars while you waited on one foot, holly-wreaths of hospitality were hung in windows of the stores, they who had 'em were getting out their furs. You hardly knew which was the best bet in balls—three, high, moth, or snow. It was no time at which to lose the rag-doll of your heart.

If Doctor Watson's investigating friend had been called in to solve this mysterious disappearance he might have observed on the Millionaire's wall a copy of "The Vampire." That would have quickly suggested, by induction, "A rag and a bone and a hank of hair." "Flip," a Scotch terrier, next to the rag-doll in the Child's heart, frisked through the halls. The hank of hair! Aha! X, the unfound quantity, represented the rag-doll. But, the bone? Well, when dogs find bones they—Done! It were an easy and a fruitful task to examine Flip's forefeet. Look, Watson! Earth—dried earth between the toes. Of course the dog—but Sherlock was not there. Therefore it devolves. But topography and architecture must intervene.

The Millionaire's palace occupied a lordly space. In front of it was a lawn close-mowed as a South Ireland man's face two days after a shave. At one side of it and fronting on another street was a pleasaunce trimmed to a leaf, and the garage and stables. The Scotch pup had ravished the rag-doll from the nursery, dragged it to a corner of the lawn, dug a hole, and buried it after the manner of careless undertakers. There you have the mystery solved, and no checks to write for the hypodermical wizard or fi'-pun notes to toss to the sergcant. Then let's get down to the heart of the thing, tiresome readers—the Christmas heart of the thing.

Fuzzy was drunk. Not riotously or helplessly or loquaciously, as you or I might get, but decently, appropriately, and inoffensively, as becomes a gentleman down on his luck.

Fuzzy was a soldier of misfortune. The road, the haystack, the park bench, the kitchen door, the bitter round of

cleemosynary beds-with-shower-bath-attachment, the petty pickings and ignobly garnered largesse of great cities—these formed the chapters of his history.

Fuzzy walked toward the river, down the street that bounded one side of the Millionaire's house and grounds. He saw a leg of Betsy, the lost rag-doll, protruding, like the clue to a Liliputian murder mystery, from its untimely grave in a corner of the fence. He dragged forth the maltreated infant, tucked it under his arm, and went on his way crooning a road song of his brethren that no doll that has been brought up to the sheltered life should hear. Well for Betsy that she had no ears. And well that she had no eyes save unseeing circles of black; for the faces of Fuzzy and the Scotch terrier were those of brothers, and the heart of no rag-doll could withstand twice to become the prey of such fearsome monsters.

Though you may not know it, Grogan's saloon stands near the river and near the foot of the street down which Fuzzy traveled. In Grogan's, Christmas cheer was already rampant.

Fuzzy entered with his doll. He fancied that as a mummer at the feast of Saturn he might earn a few drops from the wassail cup.

He set Betsy on the bar and addressed her loudly and humorously, seasoning his speech with exaggerated compliments and endearments, as one entertaining his lady friend. The loafers and bibbers around caught the farce of it, and roared. The bartender gave Fuzzy a drink. Oh, many of us carry rag-dolls.

"One for the lady?" suggested Fuzzy impudently, and tucked another contribution to Art beneath his waistcoat.

He began to see possibilities in Betsy. His first-night had been a success. Visions of a vaudeville circuit about town dawned upon him.

In a group near the stove sat "Pig-con" McCarthy, Black Riley, and "One-ear" Mike, well and unfavorably known in the tough shoestring district that blackened the left bank of the

river. They passed a newspaper back and forth among themselves. The item that each solid and blunt forefinger pointed out was an advertisement headed "One Hundred Dollars Reward." To earn it, one must return the rag-doll lost, strayed, or stolen from the Millionaire's mansion. It seemed that grief still ravaged, unchecked, in the bosom of the too faithful Child. Flip, the terrier, capered and shook his absurd whiskers before her, powerless to distract. She wailed for her Betsy in the faces of walking, talking, mama-ing, and eye-closing French Mabelles and Violettes. The advertisement was a last resort.

Black Riley came from behind the stove and approached Fuzzy in his one-sided, parabolic way.

The Christmas mummer, flushed with success, had tucked Betsy under his arm, and was about to depart to the filling of impromptu dates elsewhere.

"Say, 'Bo," said Black Riley to him, "where did you cop out dat doll?"

"This doll?" asked Fuzzy, touching Betsy with his forefinger to be sure that she was the one referred to. "Why, this doll was presented to me by the Emperor of Beloochistan. I have seven hundred others in my country home in Newport. This doll——"

"Cheese the funny business," said Riley. "You swiped it or picked it up at de house on de hill where—but never mind dat. You want to take fifty cents for de rags, and take it quick. Me brother's kid at home might be want-in' to play wid it. Hey—what?"

He produced the coin.

Fuzzy laughed a gurgling, insolent, alcoholic laugh in his face. Go to the office of Sarah Bernhardt's manager and propose to him that she be released from a night's performance to entertain the Tackytown Lyceum and Literary Coterie. You will hear the duplicate of Fuzzy's laugh.

Black Riley gaged Fuzzy quickly with his blueberry eye as a wrestler does. His hand was itching to play the Roman and wrest the rag Sabine from the extemporaneous merry-andrew who was entertaining an angel

unaware. But he refrained. Fuzzy was fat and solid and big. Three inches of well-nourished corporeity, defended from the winter winds by dingy linen, intervened between his vest and trousers. Countless small, circular wrinkles running around his coat-sleeves and knees guaranteed the quality of his bone and muscle. His small, blue eyes, bathed in the moisture of altruism and wooziness, looked upon you kindly yet without abashment. He was whiskerly, whiskyly, fleshily formidable. So, Black Riley temporized.

"Wot'll you take for it, den?" he asked.

"Money," said Fuzzy, with husky firmness, "cannot buy her."

He was intoxicated with the artist's first sweet cup of attainment. To set a faded-blue, earth-stained rag-doll on a bar, to hold mimic converse with it, and to find his heart leaping with the sense of plaudits earned and his throat scorching with free libations poured in his honor—could base coin buy him from such achievements? You will perceive that Fuzzy had the temperament.

Fuzzy walked out with the gait of a trained sea-lion in search of other cafés to conquer.

Though the dusk of twilight was hardly yet apparent, lights were beginning to spangle the city like pop-corn bursting in a deep skillet. Christmas Eve, impatiently expected, was peeping over the brink of the hour. Millions had prepared for its celebration. Towns would be painted red. You, yourself, have heard the horns and dodged the capers of the Saturnalians.

"Pigeon" McCarthy, Black Riley, and "One-ear" Mike held a hasty converse outside Grogan's. They were narrow-chested, pallid striplings, not fighters in the open, but more dangerous in their ways of warfare than the most terrible of Turks. Fuzzy, in a pitched battle, could have eaten the three of them. In a go-as-you-please encounter he was already doomed.

They overtook him just as he and Betsy were entering Costigan's Casino. They deflected him, and shoved

the newspaper under his nose. Fuzzy could read—and more.

"Boys," said he, "you are certainly damn true friends. Give me a week to think it over."

The soul of a real artist is quenched with difficulty.

The boys carefully pointed out to him that advertisements were soulless, and that the deficiencies of the day might not be supplied by the morrow.

"A cool hundred," said Fuzzy thoughtfully and mushily.

"Boys," said he, "you are true friends. I'll go up and claim the reward. The show business is not what it used to be."

Night was falling more surely. The three tagged at his sides to the foot of the rise on which stood the Millionaire's house. There Fuzzy turned upon them acrimoniously.

"You are a pack of putty-faced beagle-hounds," he roared. "Go away."

They went away—a little way.

In "Pigeon" McCarthy's pocket was a section of two-inch gas-pipe eight inches long. In one end of it and in the middle of it was a lead plug. One-half of it was packed tight with solder. Black Riley carried a slung-shot, being a conventional thug. "One-ear" Mike relied upon a pair of brass knucks—an heirloom in the family.

"Why fetch and carry," said Black Riley, "when some one will do it for ye? Let him bring it out to us. Hey—what?"

"We can chuck him in the river," said "Pigeon" McCarthy, "with a stone tied to his feet."

"Youse guys make me tired," said "One-ear" Mike sadly. "Ain't progress ever appealed to none of yez? Sprinkle a little gasoline on 'im, and drop 'im on the Drive—well?"

Fuzzy entered the Millionaire's gate and zigzagged toward the softly glowing entrance of the mansion. The three goblins came up to the gate and lingered—one on each side of it, one beyond the roadway. They fingered their cold metal and leather, confident.

Fuzzy rang the door-bell, smiling

foolishly and dreamily. An atavistic instinct prompted him to reach for the button of his right glove. But he wore no gloves; so his left hand dropped, embarrassed.

The particular menial whose duty it was to open doors to silks and laces shied at first sight of Fuzzy. But a second glance took in his passport, his card of admission, his surety of welcome—the lost rag-doll of the daughter of the house dangling under his arm.

Fuzzy was admitted into a great hall, dim with the glow from unseen lights. The hireling went away and returned with a maid and the Child. The doll was restored to the mourning one. She clasped her lost darling to her breast; and then, with the inordinate selfishness and candor of childhood, stamped her foot and whined hatred and fear of the odious being who had rescued her from the depths of sorrow and despair. Fuzzy wriggled himself into an ingratiatory attitude and essayed the idiotic smile and blattering small talk that is supposed to charm the budding intellect of the young. The Child bawled, and was dragged away, hugging her Betsy close.

There came the Secretary, pale, poised, polished, gliding in pumps, and worshipping pomp and ceremony. He counted out into Fuzzy's hand ten ten-dollar bills; then dropped his eye upon the door, transferred it to James, its custodian, indicated the obnoxious earner of the reward with the other, and allowed his pumps to waft him away to secretarial regions.

James gathered Fuzzy with his own commanding optic and swept him as far as the front door.

When the money touched Fuzzy's dingy palm his first instinct was to take to his heels; but a second thought restrained him from that blunder of etiquette. It was his; it had been given him. It—and, oh, what an elysium it opened to the gaze of his mind's eye! He had tumbled to the foot of the ladder; he was hungry, homeless, friendless, ragged, cold, drifting; and he held in his hand the key to a paradise of



the mud-honey that he craved. The fairy doll had waved a wand with her rag-stuffed hand; and now wherever he might go the enchanted palaces with shining foot-rests and magic red fluids in gleaming glassware would be open to him.

He followed James to the door.

He paused there as the flunky drew open the great mahogany portal for him to pass into the vestibule.

Beyond the wrought-iron gates in the dark highway Black Riley and his two pals casually strolled, fingering under their coats the inevitably fatal weapons that were to make the reward of the rag-doll theirs.

Fuzzy stopped at the Millionaire's door and bethought himself. Like little sprigs of mistletoe on a dead tree, certain living green thoughts and memories began to decorate his confused mind. He was quite drunk, mind you, and the present was beginning to fade. Those wreaths and festoons of holly with their scarlet berries making the great hall gay—where had he seen such things before? Somewhere he had known polished floors and odors of fresh flowers in winter, and—and some one was singing a song in the house that he thought he had heard before. Some one singing and playing a harp. Of course it was Christmas—Fuzzy thought he must have been pretty drunk to have overlooked that.

And then he went out of the present, and there came back to him out of some impossible, vanished, and irrevocable past a little, pure-white, transient, forgotten ghost—the spirit of noblesse oblige. Upon a gentleman certain things devolve.

James opened the outer door. A stream of light went down the gravelled walk to the iron gate. Black Riley, McCarthy, and One-ear Mike saw, and carelessly drew their sinister cordon closer about the gate.

With a more imperious gesture than James' master had ever used or could ever use, Fuzzy compelled the menial to close the door. Upon a gentleman certain things devolve. Especially at the Christmas season.

"It is cust—customary," he said to James, the flustered, "when a gentleman calls on Christmas Eve to pass the compliments of the season with the lady of the house. You und'stand? I shall not move shtep till I pass compliments season with lady the house. Und'stand?"

There was an argument. James lost. Fuzzy raised his voice and sent it through the house unpleasantly. I did not say he was a gentleman. He was simply a tramp being visited by a ghost.

A sterling silver bell rang. James went back to answer it, leaving Fuzzy in the hall. James explained somewhere to some one.

Then he came and conducted Fuzzy into the library.

The Lady entered a moment later. She was more beautiful and holy than any picture that Fuzzy had seen. She smiled, and said something about a doll. Fuzzy didn't understand that; he remembered nothing about a doll.

A footman brought in two small glasses of sparkling wine on a stamped sterling-silver waiter. The Lady took one. The other was handed to Fuzzy.

As his fingers closed on the slender glass stem his disabilities dropped from him for one brief moment. He straightened himself; and Time, so disobliging to most of us, turned backward to accommodate Fuzzy.

Forgotten Christmas ghosts whiter than the false beards of the most opulent Kriss Kringle were rising in the fumes of Grogan's whisky. What had the Millionaire's mansion to do with a long, wainscoted Virginia hall, where the riders were grouped around a silver punch-bowl, drinking the ancient toast of the House? And why should the patter of the cab horses' hoofs on the frozen street be in any wise related to the sound of the saddled hunters stamping under the shelter of the west veranda? And what had Fuzzy to do with any of it?

The Lady, looking at him over her glass, let her condescending smile fade away like a false dawn. Her eyes turned serious. She saw something be-

neath the rags and Scotch terrier whiskers that she did not understand. But it did not matter.

Fuzzy lifted his glass and smiled vacantly.

"P-pardon, lady," he said, "but couldn't leave without exchangin' comp'ments sheason with lady th' house. 'Gainst princ'ples gen'leman do sho."

And then he began the ancient salutation that was a tradition in the House when men wore lace ruffles and powder.

"The blessings of another year——"

Fuzzy's memory failed him. The Lady prompted:

"——Be upon this hearth."

"——The guest——" stammered Fuzzy.

"——And upon her who——" continued the Lady, with a leading smile.

"Oh, cut it out," said Fuzzy, ill-manneredly. "I can't remember. Drink hearty."

Fuzzy had shot his arrow. They

drank. The Lady smiled again the smile of her caste. James enveloped Fuzzy and re-conducted him toward the front door. The harp music still softly drifted through the house.

Outside, Black Riley breathed on his cold hands and hugged the gate.

"I wonder," said the Lady to herself, musing, "who—but there were so many who came. I wonder whether memory is a curse or a blessing to them after they have fallen so low."

Fuzzy and his escort were nearly at the door. The Lady called: "James!"

James stalked back obsequiously, leaving Fuzzy waiting unsteadily, with his brief spark of the divine fire gone.

Outside, Black Riley stamped his cold feet and got a firmer grip on his section of gas-pipe.

"You will conduct this gentleman," said the Lady, "down-stairs. Then tell Louis to get out the Mercedes and take him to whatever place he wishes to go."



## A DREAM

I DREAMED last night I died,  
Dim was the room  
Methought, and filled with flow'rs.  
Alone I lay,  
Heavy upon my bosom was a wreath.

In my still heart I knew  
Whose hand had laid  
The sumptuous offering there.  
I stirred, oppressed,  
And in the gloom I heard mine own voice speak,

"Oh Friend that weighs my heart  
With wreathed flow'rs,  
If yester morn  
In my warm hand you had but pressed one rose  
Its living bloom were in my cheek to-day."

MARGARET BELLE HOUSTON.



# CONCERNING AMERICAN MEN

*By Carolyn Rapelyea*



AMERICANS? Oh, you are charming, you women. I love to be with American women. But your men! No, they are impossible!"

This is what the American woman in Europe hears everywhere; said with exasperating brusqueness and lack of consideration. How does the self-assured foreigner dare to take for granted that the American woman will not resent criticisms of American men? But the foreigner does make this assumption, and, as he is a person of experience, he has probably often assumed it with impunity.

In reply, Miss Firstrip tells him that American men are really the nicest in the world, that she likes them, admires them, devoutly trusts them—and then she hesitates for barely a minute, suddenly realizing that she hasn't quite made up her mind whether she means to go home to marry Sam Brown, who is pegging away in his father's office in Buffalo, or whether she means—

But the foreigner takes advantage of the pause in her eulogy. "Oh, yes, no doubt," he replies, with a shrug, "they may be all that and much more. But, really, you know, you don't find them entertaining, now, do you?"

Miss Firstrip, with the privilege of the American girl, doesn't take the trouble to answer. The question has set her thinking seriously, as it happens, on the relative charms of Sam

Brown and of the European men whom she has recently been meeting.

Sam Brown is a familiar American type. He was educated on the theory that everything that was not "practical" was to be omitted from his curriculum. "There is no use wasting money on music lessons for Sam," said his mother. "Of course the girls, although they have no more talent than he, must take lessons. But it's different with boys."

"Mathematics and the sciences for Sam," said his father. "French? That's an accomplishment for his sisters. It would be no earthly use to a boy."

Being an average boy, Sam felt no yearning for season-tickets to symphony concerts. Music seemed to him an effeminate taste. In the bottom of his soul, he regarded Willie Smythe, who studied the violin, with pity and contempt. As for art, he would as soon have considered breaking into a bank as visiting a picture-gallery.

Sam went through Yale without seeing good reason for materially altering his views. "Education," a Western college president has said, "is like measles. Having been to college doesn't prove that you've caught it, but only that you've been exposed to it." Esthetically, Sam had not "caught it," although he had had a very good time collecting miscellaneous information and associations.

Mr. Brown's views on Sam's future career were decided. "No more waste

of time now, my boy," he said on Sam's graduation day. "You've got to learn to break into the game. A little roughing it won't hurt you, either. I had enough of it in my day, goodness knows."

So, immediately on leaving college, Sam was started in the Brown factory at Newark—at the bottom of it. It was a sociological experiment of the practical variety. Sam kept factory hours, did factory work, received factory pay—seven dollars a week; and lived on it, too, except for the sums surreptitiously sent by his mother. Then he was transferred to the Buffalo office. This was a promotion, but no sinecure. The work was as hard and as long as in Newark. Samuel senior, although he wouldn't have acknowledged it to Samuel junior, began to be rather proud of his son. "I guess he'll do," said the elder; "he's evidently a chip of the old block"—the highest compliment that he could bestow.

It was then that Sam fell in love with Marguerite Firstrip. Marguerite was a "peach," adorably pretty and sweet-natured. Even though she had been through a woman's college, she had the knack of always saying the right thing, in a way that convinced Sam that he was a star in his own right. He was in the way of talking to her for hours about business; and her interest never apparently flagged. Golf was another favorite topic; and after that, motoring. Both became wildly enthusiastic motorists.

In fact, the only time that Sam ever saw a flaw in Marguerite was one night at a dinner-party. On her other side sat a distinguished somebody, visiting America on a lecture tour. To Sam's ears came scraps of their conversation—incomprehensible references to meaningless "Celtic literature," "symbolism," and a jumble of unheard-of names and phrases. On that occasion Sam suspected that Marguerite had a trace of "bookishness," and that her character was decidedly too adaptable.

"What rot you were talking!" he remarked to her the next day.

"Wasn't it?" she agreed amiably, to his unspoken relief.

Then he had proposed, and she had not accepted him. Instead, she had explained that she had planned to spend a year abroad.

"All right," agreed Sam. "I'll ask you again when you come back. I'm here whenever you'll have me; and I'll drop you a line often enough to prevent that statement from escaping your mind."

So Marguerite had sailed away to enjoy in Europe the usual experience of the attractive American girl. To her surprise, she found that the fact that she came from across the water counted in her favor. True, it was occasionally tiresome to serve as a specimen, but to have people applaud all one's words and actions was delightful. This was particularly true in their detours from the conventional tourists' routes. For instance, once she and her mother went to a little village on the east coast of England. There they met a Cambridge don, a very learned person, all eagerness to meet "my first American ladies." Marguerite saw a great deal of him; so much so, that when he was leaving she said, with the American style of coquetry which masquerades as ingenuousness: "It's too bad that you have wasted so much time with us that you haven't opened your big Spanish books."

Instead of the gallant reply, which Marguerite's former summer vacation experiences had trained her to expect instinctively, the don looked embarrassed, and muttered: "Well, anyway, we have been in the open air."

That episode appealed to Marguerite's humor. She had been equally pleased when another Englishman turned up in Rome, where the Firstrips were to winter. One day he received the message that Miss Firstrip was not feeling well, and was sorry that she could not receive him. He answered simply: "It doesn't make the slightest difference."

On the whole, however, she liked the blunt Englishmen, and, after them, foreign men in general. If they did not

always make a ready rejoinder, they had far more general interests than the American men with whom her lot had been cast. She found it a delightful change not to feel that she must select conversational topics adapted to the masculine intelligence, omitting themes of lively interest to herself, but to which she would get no response. Here, she found, men who were not musicians were in the habit of going to concerts. Men who did not paint haunted galleries. Marguerite thought of Sam and the Buffalo factory. Sam had more brains than all these men could muster among them. But he had limitations which any one of these could overstep.

Marguerite hinted her doubts to Evelyn, an American acquaintance; a seasoned society woman when Marguerite was a *débutante*. Evelyn preferred Europe for at least half of each year.

"American men are usually deadly," this semi-expatriate instructed her sagely. "It's their misfortune, not their fault, poor things. It's because of the way they've been brought up, and the way they work. Speaking generally, the only ones I can tolerate are the dismal failures. Very often they are amusing."

"But aren't our men far more unselfish than the ones over here?" inquired Marguerite.

"In a way, of course, that must be granted," replied the *cicerone*. "For instance, suppose your shoe-lace is untied. Your American Sam Brown will really like to tie it. Tying it will give him genuine pleasure, because he enjoys doing things for you. He'll tell you it's not the slightest trouble. Your English Leicester Thorley won't want to stoop over. That's a terrible bore. But because he thinks that you are a charming girl, he'll be willing to make the exertion. He'll see that you appreciate the effort, too. And you'll feel far more flattered with Leicester's reluctant attention than with the obliging Sam's."

"I wonder——" queried Marguerite. But her lesson for the day was only

beginning. "Why do you suppose I like living in Europe better than living in America?" went on Evelyn, in answer to her young friend's unspoken question. "Because, although I am not one bit fonder of men's society than most women of twenty-nine, I'll admit that now and then I like to be with men who are interesting. At home, when I want to be with people who care for what I care for, I must either be with women, or else with the few men whose professional work lies along those lines. The other men, poor dears—and they're in the overwhelming majority, of course—haven't time or energy outside of their business hours. They can talk you to extinction on their own subjects, but they are hopelessly ignorant or bored about everything else. What you do isn't really to converse with them. You just hunt round in the dark until your hand happens to strike the faucet of their own special work; then you turn on the current of speech, and there you are!"

Marguerite smiled with pensive reminiscence. Quite fascinated with her own powers of analysis, her instructor continued: "The most pathetic sight in the world is the flock of women surrounding college professors at American summer resorts, listening to monologues on all subjects under heaven. That shows the eternal feminine craving for masculine culture. Some woman, chosen to be the leader of the flock, always begins: 'And what do you think, Professor Know-all, about psychic research, or Bernard Shaw, or some item in the morning's paper?' Then how they hang on his lips! Why? Because it is such a rarity to hear a man's voice expressing ideas on a theme of general interest. Let us take the case of a really bright man; a successful broker on Wall Street, for example. Mr. Ticker is very lovely and illuminating on stocks and mining life and free silver and commercial treaties, but, like almost all my countrymen, he talks to you as if you might just as well be a rag doll as a woman."

"Oh, Evelyn," protested Marguerite. "What do you mean?"

"Exactly what I say, although you are probably too young to feel it. Your contemporaries in America are not so bad—they are scarcely more than schoolboys. But the mature men are—well, let us call it 'impersonal.' They are hopelessly impersonal. When they marry they seem to forget that other women are still women; and they talk as if you and they were brothers and sisters."

"How you do exaggerate!"

"Not a bit. You know you have often heard a working man say, when arguing with a woman: 'I tell you, sir—' The same situation prevails higher up in the social scale. It is the typical American attitude. It explains what people over here mean when they say there are three sexes—'men, women, and Americans.'"

Marguerite looked puzzled. She was twenty-two, and the men of her age were not "impersonal." She could scarcely follow Evelyn's trend of ideas. "Anyway, you will have to admit that no men in the world *do* as much for their women as ours!" she urged triumphantly.

Evelyn shook her head in a discouraged way. "It is a waste, my dear; a perfect waste of effort," she replied. "We don't half appreciate their labors. We would rather have less done, and that little done in better form. You must admit that one reason why you can't help liking Englishmen, is because they are so uncompromisingly lords of creation. Pray tell me, what is the reason that so many American women marry Germans? Simply because we think that for a change we should like to have a chance to serve! As for the enchanting Italians, we fall madly in love with them just because to them every woman is not a sister or a comrade; but is first, last, and at all times supremely a woman."

"But," protested the girl, "you hear people say that Italians have such terribly low ideas of women; so little real respect."

"The Italians? Well, perhaps. But

a great deal depends upon the point of view, my dear girl. The nice American man puts woman on a pedestal. He says she is a wonderful creature, immeasurably higher than he. He thinks she is there to be worshiped and protected. It is all very fine and pretty. But the pedestal is so narrow that after a time the woman longs to descend. That exalted position grows rather fatiguing, you know; particularly when you are no longer sixteen. So she takes a little step down, just to see what the real world is like. And he, poor, silly worshiper, is terribly frightened and shocked. His faith is not generous enough to endure the realization that perhaps, after all, she, too, is human!"

"Whereas the Italian man?"

"Oh, his attitude is quite different. In him there is no pedestal. He could not understand the construction of such a superfluous piece of social furniture. He cherishes no illusions, and makes love to no goddess. Therefore he may lack reverence; but don't you see that thereby he has more tolerance for her weaknesses? So there you are!"

After a pause, Marguerite suggested: "At least, you can understand our men, and that is a comfort."

"True," assented Evelyn; "but a comfort is not particularly exciting. On the whole, however, far be it from me to take the responsibility of advising you to marry a foreigner, even an Englishman, delightful as they are."

"Why not?"

"Because, for one thing, you want your own way. At least, it is safe to assume that you do, for it is usual among American women. I don't believe that you could stand the hypothesis, day in day out, that you were not the most important object in the household. I'll concede that you'd agree that your children were more important than yourself, but it goes against the American grain to acknowledge the headship of a mere husband."

"I suppose," laughed Marguerite, "that it would be only an American



wife who would say that, if her husband died, she should never marry again—she preferred closet room to a husband."

"One of the happiest marriages I know," mused Evelyn, "is that of a friend of mine, whom I met the day after her engagement was announced. 'Dick is very nice,' I said. 'He is,' she assented calmly; 'and improving every day.'"

Marguerite smiled. "That is hardly according to girlish ideals," she remarked.

"But so sensible," answered Evelyn. Then was a pause, while Marguerite meditated again on Sam.

Evelyn broke the silence. "I sometimes wonder how they dare ask us to marry them, these foreign men, when they see so much that must seem *outré* to them. Only this morning I was talking with a nice Scotch woman, who said: 'I admire American women immensely; but it doesn't always seem as if they treated their husbands with quite enough consideration. Aren't American husbands just a little—well, I don't want to seem rude, but do tell me if they aren't just a little henpecked?'"

"What did you answer?"

"That such an effect was merely on the surface; that with us, the masculine superiority was so unquestioned that it wasn't necessary to seem to admit it. I was most patriotic. Just as I was speaking, though, the vision of a wedding-party flitted before my eyes, and I heard an American bride say to the groom: 'Charles, I won't allow you to do that—I forbid it.' My eloquence was stemmed."

Marguerite grew very serious. "Tell me, Evelyn," she begged—"you know so many people—how do you think the attitude of the men over here toward their wives really differs from ours?"

The preceptress looked as solemn as an owl. "Of course, my dear girl," she said, "generalizations are worthless. That is why I adore them. In the matter of these differences under discussion, so much depends upon the nation-

ality, that only broad conclusions can be drawn. The German, as every one knows, wants a good housekeeper, a good manager, a good caretaker of the children. The Englishman wants a companion, not exactly an equal, but some one whose aim in life shall be to smooth his way and help in his career. Such matters as house and children should be insignificant to her beside his almighty self. It was an English artist who replied to congratulations on his engagement: 'I think she will make me work—you know I find that very hard.'"

"How utilitarian," murmured Marguerite. "And the others?"

"An Italian or a Frenchman? Oh, well, marriage to him is an affair to be deeply considered in all its advantageous aspects. Quite aside from the fine art of love-making, marriage is a contract from which benefits should accrue. It is an alliance—suitable, *convenable*, desirable."

"Now, for our American?"

"An American? You know that he will give you almost anything, and in return, ask for very little. Then if he bores you, you can be like all the rest of the women that you meet over here, and leave him at work while you go to Europe."

Evelyn rose. In that day the topic had been exhausted between them; or so she thought. But Marguerite was not so ready to relinquish the theme.

"Evelyn, you are very wise," she suggested, before leaving her friend; "but doesn't it occur to you, that in all these rules and regulations, you have left the detail of falling in love quite out of the account?" It was her parting shot, and Marguerite, aged twenty-two, felt that she had scored a point against the worldly-wise Evelyn. In fact, Marguerite felt so complacent, that on her way home she stopped the cab to look over a display of postcards. She selected one card for Sam—the Coliseum by moonlight. Other European views might leave poor, dear Sam in doubt, but that one, she felt sure, he would recognize.

# THE NEW MUSICAL SEASON



HE present season of music in New York is one of the most interesting and important the city has ever known. Of course, the general public takes more notice of the opera than of any other form of music, and this season the air has been unusually heavy with operatic gossip because of the announcement that the energetic Oscar Hammerstein had determined to bound into the operatic arena and oppose the monopoly enjoyed by the Metropolitan Opera-House. It was confidently expected that this movement would result in the assumption of renewed activity on the part of Mr. Conried, the Metropolitan impresario; and Europe sat up and waited for the spring visits of the managers. Newspaper predictions in regard to Mr. Conried were fulfilled. He went abroad and engaged a far more expensive and elaborate company than he had last winter. He even tried to get the great Jean de Reszke to come back, but that master of the art of singing, after a few experiments with his own voice, told the impresario that his artistic career was over. Jean de Reszke thus laid aside an offer of \$75,000 for the season. He is too great an artist to come back to America and terminate his career with failure.

Mr. Conried has engaged other eminent singers, some new and some old, and he is to produce some new operas. Of these new works undoubtedly that which will stir up the largest amount of public talk is the "Salomé" of Rich-

ard Strauss. Opera-goers in this country know nothing about Strauss, but lovers of orchestral music and song recitals are well acquainted with his compositions. He is the most discussed composer in Germany at the present time. He has been in America, but his personal success was small. He is not especially interesting, and his wife, who came with him to sing some of his songs, is a very bad singer and dresser indeed. But Mr. Conried endeavored to get Strauss to come over to conduct "Salomé," for in connection with that work he would surely have become an interesting personality. The opera itself is a short piece, lasting eighty minutes, but it requires a huge orchestra, including instruments not usually heard.

The story, which deals with the love of the daughter of Herod for John the Baptist, will shock thousands of people; and when it is recalled that Mr. Strauss is nothing if not realistic, especially when it comes to putting on the stage matters which are customarily reserved for private discussion, there will be no lack of inducement to attend the performance of this new work, even if the music does belong to the new problem school. It must also be borne in mind that Olive Fremstad, the sinuous blond contralto whose *Kundry* was the most seductive of the three disclosed in the "Parsifal" performances, will be the heroine of the opera. In her hands the passionate woman who kissed the lips of the severed head on the charger will lose nothing. *John* will be impersonated by Carl Burrian, a newcomer, a tenor who

has had success in Dresden, one of the most musical cities of Germany. Anton van Rooy, the big Dutch basso, who wanders through most of every season as the unhappy father of the Norse gods in the Wagnerian "Ring" tragedy, will also have a new part in this work.

A composer named Cilea has made an opera out of the old play "Adrienne Lecouvreur," in which Sarah Bernhardt has so often moved audiences to tears, and Mr. Conried will utilize this work to present a new Italian singer in one of her best parts. This new singer is Lina Cavallieri, a slender, willowy woman of much photographic charm. She has sung frequently with Caruso in Monte Carlo, and is celebrated throughout Italy for her beauty. Puccini, the composer of "Tosca" and "La Bohème," is said to be coming over to superintend the production of his "Madame Butterfly," an opera which had extraordinary success in London last year. The queen fell in love with it, and attended every performance. The story is familiar here in dramatic form. This work will give ample opportunity for the talents of one of Mr. Conried's new singers, of whom much is expected. This is Geraldine Farrar, an American girl, who has had great success in various European cities. She is a handsome woman, with a mobile and expressive countenance. Her voice is said to be big, sonorous, and well trained. All accounts agree that she has real genius as an actress. A private letter to this writer from Munich, where she was one of the stars of the Wagner festival at the Prince Regent Theater, describes her *Elizabeth* in "Tannhäuser" as one of the noblest impersonations ever seen, while at the Mozart festival in Salzburg she achieved another striking success as *Zerlina*, in "Don Giovanni," a rôle given here to Madame Sembrich. Miss Farrar was compared by the German papers to Pauline Lucca. She is said also to be admirable as *Juliet* in Gounod's opera. Her versatility is one of her greatest possessions.

Mr. Conried is bringing over also

Berta Morena, of Munich, the adored singer of the Bavarian capital. She, too, is a beauty, a stately woman with a fine voice and eyes that will make the uncritical forget her vocal deficiencies. She was to have come here last season, but her health was bad. Madame Ternina is to return. It is said that her voice is as good as ever it was. She sang in Munich last summer with immense success. Other old favorites to be heard again are Sembrich, Eames, Homer, and Schumann-Heink. The last-named has had her fling in comic opera and found it to be not all that Fritz Scheff had painted it. So she has returned to her true field. She delighted Munich last summer, and early in the autumn she came back to New York, accompanied by seven of her children, and announced in no uncertain tones that song recitals would occupy her time when she was not required at the Metropolitan.

Of course, the adorable tenor, Caruso, is here with his wife and his valet and his tailor, and his chef and perruquier and his accompanist. Caruso is a very particular tenor, and cannot trust the common commercial tailors of Fifth Avenue to cut his coats. The elegant and enthusiastic Antonio Scotti is again one of Mr. Conried's barytones. There are a lot of other singers, great and small, in the company, and revivals of old favorite operas are announced. Altogether the Metropolitan season is one of uncommon promise.

At the time of this writing, the knowing ones are wagering much honorable coin that Mr. Hammerstein will do amazing things. He has done them often; in fact, he prides himself on doing them. Several years ago I met him on the Rialto and said: "Well, are you going to build another new theater this year?"

"No," he answered; "but you never can tell what I'm going to do. There are two things I haven't done yet—been arrested for embezzlement or run away with another man's wife. But you never can tell what I'm going to do."

Mr. Hammerstein's list of singers

contains fewer celebrated names than that of Mr. Conried, but it promises well. At the head of the women is Madame Melba, whose last attempt to sing in opera in this country ended in disaster, owing to an obstinate cold. She is said to have regained all the old beauty of her voice, and also to be now receiving \$4,000 a performance, the largest salary ever paid to any prima donna except Madame Patti. Madame Melba herself is the authority for this statement.

Edouard de Reszke, the big basso who used to delight Metropolitan Opera-House audiences by his *Mephistopheles*, is coming over as a member of the Hammerstein forces. It is no secret that he has been as anxious to return as his brother has to stay away.

Eleanore de Cisneros is one of the new names. She used to sing small parts at the Metropolitan, when she was known as Eleanor Broadfoot. She went to Europe, got an engagement in Spain, and became the wife of a Spaniard, Señor de Cisneros. Suddenly the Spanish papers began to throb with accounts of her successes. She sang in Italy, and the tale was repeated. Finally she went to London, where she sang in an autumn season, and even the London papers praised her. Naturally she has yearned to come home and show her countrymen what she learned in Europe, and her opportunity was found in the launching of the Hammerstein enterprise.

Maurice Renaud, the leading barytone of Paris, is one of the new impresario's most important engagements. Renaud has proved himself a genuine artist, at home in every school. His *Beckmesser* in "Meistersinger," was said to be one of the best of all interpretations of this much-abused rôle.

One of the contraltos of the new company is Madame Bressier-Gianoli, of whom the local public knows nothing. Two years ago a company of French opera singers came here in the spring from New Orleans, and gave a season at the Casino. Of course, only a few persons knew what was going on, but the critics discovered that Ma-

dame Bressier-Gianoli was a trained operatic artist. Mr. Hammerstein tucked that fact away in the back of his head and waited for an opportunity to use it to his own advantage.

But the developments of the winter will be needed to show the real value of the Manhattan Theater company. It will need these, too, to demonstrate the readiness of New York for two operatic institutions. All competition in this field has hitherto proved fatal to one or the other of the contending enterprises, and this has also been the case in Europe, even from Handel's day to the present. If New York supports two operas it will do what no other city does. Paris has its Grand Opéra and its Opéra Comique, to be sure, but they do not compete, because the same operas are not produced by both, and the paternal hand of the government makes pecuniary failure impossible. The circumstances here are entirely different. The operatic impresario must stand on his feet, and if he falls he falls like Lucifer.

In the musical field, outside of opera, the interest of the public centers in the great orchestral concerts. Into this field, however, the personal element has entered in recent seasons. After the death of Anton Seidl, the Philharmonic Society, of New York, found itself impelled to look about for some method of stimulating public curiosity. The plan of engaging a series of star conductors from Europe was finally hit upon and put into execution. The society followed this plan for two seasons, and the results were pecuniarily comforting to the members. Several distinguished conductors were brought from various parts of Europe, and presently the thoughts of all lovers of orchestral concerts were centered on the personalities, mannerisms, and methods of these directors rather than on the music itself. At the present time the whole orchestral situation revolves around the conductors. If the ladies do not like the way Mr. Strikemoff wears his back hair, or the way Mr. Swingabout uses his baton, these gentlemen turn their faces to the eastward

and disappear for good over the distant purple rim of the sea. A few honest music lovers earnestly consider the deeper and more esthetic qualities of these conductors, but the women rule in this matter, as they do in most other musical affairs.

Among the conductors whom the Philharmonic Society found in Europe was one Wassili Safonoff, who was as much unknown in America as the Greek digamma in a village of Digger Indians. Mr. Safonoff had long cherished a high ambition. He burned to conduct orchestras without the use of a baton. He desired to disseminate Tschaiakowsky and Beethoven with the bare hands. The Philharmonic fathers told him to go ahead and try it. He did, and lo! the populace rose up and said it was a stunt of the mightiest. Mr. Safonoff was invited to return a second season and touch the harp again with his naked fingers. Again the people marveled greatly. The result was that the Philharmonic Society decided that it had found its long-lost father and engaged him as its permanent conductor.

This season he is directing all the concerts—without gloves. It will be worth while waiting to see how long it will take the Philharmonic audiences to find out that the art of conducting does not consist in the use or disuse of a baton. Safonoff himself is a big-hearted, full-blooded fellow, and a good musician. He would not mind shaking the dust of Russia off his feet for good and all and remaining in America with his wife and eight children for life. He receives from the Philharmonic Society the comforting salary of \$20,000 a year for three years. He is also to have the direction of a local school of music.

The principal rival of the Philharmonic Society, though no rivalry is admitted, is the New York Symphony Society, of which Walter Damrosch is the conductor. Mr. Damrosch directs his own concerts, except occasionally when he invites some eminent visitor to do so. This season his star guest will be Camille Saint-Saëns, the famous

French composer. Mr. Saint-Saëns is a man of uncommon parts. He has done a little of many things, and has done it well. He has composed poems, has written elegantly and thoughtfully about music and musicians, and has distinguished himself by being first an admirer and afterward an opponent of Wagner. His compositions for orchestra are graceful and captivating, and he has penned some pleasing piano music and songs. Of course, being a Frenchman, he has composed operas, for in France the stage is the royal road to fame. But Saint-Saëns' operas have never bitten deeply. In this country only his decorous "Samson et Dalila" is known. His visit, however, is one of the interesting features of the current musical season, and it will enable the American public to make the acquaintance of a musician of aristocratic style and literary tendencies.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra gives ten concerts in New York every winter, and is regarded as almost a local institution. This splendid body of players will be directed by a new conductor this season. Wilhelm Gericke, who wielded its baton so long, has gone home to Vienna, and his place is filled by Doctor Carl Muck, one of the leading spirits of music in Germany. Muck is forty-seven years old, a product of the Leipsic and Salzburg cult in music, a confidant and trusted aid of Cosima Wagner in the portentous Wagnerian festivals at Baireuth. In person he is a slender, sharp-faced, polished-looking German, Machiavellian of cast, and suggesting the velvet-shod iron hand in every pose. But he is a stranger to us as yet, and we are strangers to him. Many of these autocratic foreigners change wonderfully after a few months in the atmosphere of America. Every one of them arrives with the notion that he is bringing light to a nation of savages; but they get over that notion. Many of them go home sadder and wiser men.

After the orchestras, the general public finds its next interest in the solo performers. There is no question that this is to be a season of the greatest

activity among them. In the first place, Paderewski is coming back, not for a long tour, but just for a few concerts with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The devotees who love to dissolve themselves in tears, or shudder with indescribable emotions while the high-priest of the keyboard is sending heart-waves across the auditorium from a piano half-hidden in dim, mysterious light, will not have opportunities for their revels. There will be no recitals. Paderewski will play only with orchestra, and it is an open secret that four-fifths of the Paderewski worshipers prefer to hear him without a concert of instruments. They desire him all alone—just him and the piano and the melt-ings. But it is better to have him with orchestra than not at all. Wherever and whenever he plays the house is full. It matters not what he plays nor how he plays. It is Paderewski; that is enough. All this causes the famous pianist to sigh many a weary sigh. He is a true artist, and he wishes to have his art appreciated at its real value. But, of course, he needs the money. He is absurdly generous, and though he has made two or three fortunes, he is not a rich man. Since he married the Countess Helene Gorski, however, the money does not flee away so fast. The wife is thrifty, and she has brought system to bear on her husband's charitable inclinations.

Rosenthal, the little Rumanian giant of the keyboard, is also coming. He dwells in a different atmosphere from that which surrounds Paderewski. The latter melts, but Rosenthal amazes. A German who heard him for the first time said: "Himmel! You would think there were six men at the piano." Rosenthal is a brilliant conversationalist, a wit, and a man of culture. A local composer once took to him a new piano concerto. Rosenthal read it through with much solemnity and then exclaimed: "Colossal! You are the only living composer who can write a concerto without a single idea."

These two famous pianists will attract the largest amount of interest, but they will not be alone in the field. Ca-

mille Saint-Saëns, the French composer, already mentioned, is a pianist, and he will doubtless play some of his own music. And there will be many others, for the musical season is prolific in pianists. No doubt there will be much curiosity about Josef Lhevinne, the Russian player, who is to make an extensive tour. Lhevinne was a teacher in the Moscow Conservatory, which was forced to close by the Russian disturbances two years ago. He was at a loss for employment, when Safonoff, who was about to come here for his Philharmonic engagement, suggested to him to try America. Lhevinne came, but no one had ever heard of him, and he had a hard time to get a hearing, but his nationality finally secured him one with the Russian Symphony Orchestra. He pleased the audience, and was liberally praised by the critics. The result was more engagements, and finally a big offer from a prominent piano firm for this season. Lhevinne is a smooth-faced, bushy-haired fellow, a little uncontrolled in appearance and manner, and a player of the vigorous and brilliant school.

Violinists, too, are to be heard in plenty, but among these are none who have what may best be described as a hypnotic effect on the general public. Violin-playing is for the really musical. Song recitals, however, carry us back to a region wherein dwell some public idols. Madame Sembrich easily leads the field in this domain. Her song recitals are always crowded, and well they may be, for such a mistress of the art of song interpretation the world has seldom seen.

The most intimate and chaste form of musical art is chamber-music, and in this department the supremacy is claimed by the Kneisel Quartet, which used to belong to Boston, but which now dwells in New York. Four serious and elevated musicians are those composing this organization, and their concerts in Mendelssohn Hall are attended by large audiences of the innermost circle of real music lovers. An interesting addition to the musical forces of the metropolis in recent sea-



sons has been the Olive Mead Quartet, consisting of four women players, all genuine artists, led by Miss Mead, who is a pupil of Franz Kneisel, the leader of the Kneisel Quartet. These women play admirably, and they are good to see while they are playing.

There are several other quartets, but they do not command general attention. Choral music will be provided as usual by the Oratorio and Musical Art Societies. These two organizations are conducted by Frank Damrosch, the busiest musician in New York. No one except himself knows how he gets through the vast amount of work which he accomplishes. He is the head of the Institute of Musical Art, which came into existence last season, and is already one of the flourishing music schools of the town, the conductor of the Young People's Symphony Concerts in addition to the other two series already named, teaches certain branches in his own school, and occasionally has time to go to hear other musicians perform. He is an older brother of Walter Damrosch, and between the two they direct a large part of the musical activity of New York.

This cursory survey of the musical season necessarily omits even more than

it mentions, for there is no space to accord to such interesting features as the Russian Symphony Society, the People's Symphony Concerts, the People's Choral Union, and half a dozen other enterprises, while a myriad of minor entertainments cannot even be enumerated in advance. New York's musical season, with its threat of over two hundred operatic performances and nearly one hundred and fifty orchestral concerts, to say nothing of all the choral, chamber-music, and solo entertainments, is something not to be dismissed in the space of a single article. Public taste for good music grows in New York every year. A dozen seasons ago the Philharmonic Society's series was the only profitable one on the orchestral list; now they are all self-supporting, and almost all reap a handsome profit. The opera pays munificently, and even the refined chamber-music concerts make handsome returns to their projectors. Taking it by and large, New York may now fairly be regarded as in the same class as London. The British capital, like Berlin, can present a longer list of concerts, but those which are actually supported by the public are as numerous here as they are in any European city.



## A REBEL PRAYER

LO, I have sold my birthright for love's song,  
 And while the music lingered in my ears  
 I heeded not the pain, nor felt the wrong,  
 But now—oh, God, the tortured hours are long—  
 How shall I face the years?

I stole my joy, and Fate has made it brief;  
 My whole life mocks me with its emptiness.  
 I am not penitent, I shrink from grief;  
 I am rebellious, and beyond belief  
 I long for happiness.

Kill in my heart its hopes that falsely burn;  
 Teach me the sorrow that bids all fear cease;  
 Force me with patient tenderness to turn  
 My hands and eyes to other's help, and earn  
 Something akin to peace.

J. LEE MATHERSON.



# PLAYS AND PLAYERS

CHANNING POLLOCK

Seventeen new productions in twenty-five days. Annie Russell delightful as Puck, but "A Midsummer Night's Dream" not in Shakespeare's best vein. A journalistic play difficult to write. "The Stolen Story" of that ilk a dire failure financially, but, nevertheless, a very interesting play. The performance of Stephen Phillips' "Paolo and Francesca" an artistic delight, but the play not good for dramatic purposes. "The Prince of India" an admirable work, though not a good play, chiefly on account of its remoteness. The acting too unvaryingly heroic. Israel Zangwill's "Nurse Marjorie" has a deal of quaint humor, but is completely artificial. "The Great Divide" a big dramatic triumph, and Margaret Anglin and Henry Miller score heavily in it. Sardou's "The Love Letter" a return to his comedy vein. N. C. Goodwin a personal success in "The Genius," which is entertaining, if thin and unimportant. Montgomery and Stone in "The Red Mill" have excited a veritable furore. "The Spring Chicken" Americanized by Richard Carle. Other productions.



H, but this has been a lively month!

Twenty-five working days and seventeen new productions—not to speak of revivals and concerts. I haven't gone to any of the concerts. Music may have charms to soothe the savage breast, but what's the use of having your savage breast soothed when there's a managerial conspiracy to make you lead the strenuous life?

Unless I'm mistaken, my last contribution to this magazine began with statistics much like those given above. I'm sorry to repeat myself, but the strongest of us like a little sympathy. Seventeen new productions in twenty-five days means that one must go to the theater nearly every night; and, relish beefsteak as one will, there comes

a time when one would find a bit of chicken palatable at dinner.

Only seven of the plays to which I have referred will be visible in Manhattan when you get the December number of AINSLEE'S. There have been two or three notable successes, however; and these, added to the hits of the early season, make quite a respectable list. A new theater has been opened at the corner of Forty-fifth Street and Broadway, further accenting the up-town movement of the Rialto. This house is called the Astor, and its interior is quite as handsome as that of any place of amusement in town. Richard Wagner's idea that an auditorium should serve merely as a frame for the picture on the stage, and that the builder should avoid whatever might distract attention from that picture, has been adopted by the architect of the Astor. The design of the structure is Greek,

and the color scheme is restfully negative. No other local place of amusement has so agreeable an effect on the tired senses, unless, perhaps, one excepts the Hudson.

Wagenhals & Kemper, the managers of the Astor, chose as their initial attraction a revival of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," in which *Puck* was played by Annie Russell. This rôle was not considered an important one by Shakespeare; but then Shakespeare had never seen Maude Adams in "Peter Pan." That Miss Russell had the advantage over the bard in this respect was indicated by the spirit of her performance, by her pictures and postures, and by the fact that she selected the character for herself in preference to *Helena*.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" is the least remarkable work of the late William S. I'll wager dollars to doughnuts that the piece was intended simply as a burlesque on the reigning successes of the season of 1595-96, and that the author would have been delighted if he could have got Joe Weber for the rôle of *Bottom*. Certainly, Mr. Weber never indulged in more clowning than marks the second and fourth acts of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The comedy would be utterly impossible but for the fantastic story of *Oberon* and *Titania*, the charm of a few poetic passages, and the opportunity for comparison it gives from the fact that many notable casts have appeared in it. Of these companies, that which acted at Daly's Theater in 1888, and which included Ada Rehan, Joseph Holland, Charles Fisher, Otis Skinner, John Drew, Charles Leclercq, Frederick Bond, James Lewis, William Gilbert, Eugene Ormonde, Effie Shannon, and Bijou Fernandez, probably was the finest.

Miss Russell, who hasn't been seen in New York for two or three years, represented *Puck* in a vein of whimsical humor that was very delightful. Her appearance was pleasing, too; I sha'n't soon forget the picture she made sitting on a bench at the end of the play and blowing on "the pipes o' Pan"—first

name Peter, as I have remarked before. The supporting organization was distinguished and quite adequate, though only Edwin Mordaunt, Lansing Rowan, James Young, and John Bunny betrayed any particular ear for the reading of blank verse. Mr. Bunny, an essentially modern comedian, until recently associated with "Way Down East" and "The Embarrassment of Riches," was deliciously unctuous as *Bottom*. The production, while not as expensive as that which Nat C. Goodwin made at the New Amsterdam, was in better taste.

There are two reasons why it is difficult to satisfy anybody with a play written around the Fourth Estate. People unfamiliar with the natural history of the genus journalist can never be made to understand the instincts and habits of the bird; while people who are familiar with the subject positively refuse to recognize the accuracy of any representation. One of the most marked peculiarities of the newspaper man is an exaggerated idea of his peculiarities. I've a scribe in a play of mine, called "In the Bishop's Carriage," and recently a dramatic critic in Bay City, Michigan, remarked: "The worst fault with your piece is that the reporter in it isn't a bit like the real article."

"That's queer," I replied. "I've spent most of my life around newspaper offices, and the chap in the part was an editor nine years before he became an actor."

All this apropos of the fact that Jesse Lynch Williams' "The Stolen Story," presented at the Garden Theater in October, was a dire failure financially. The public couldn't understand the piece because there was so much newspaper in it; and the critics condemned it because there was so little. In spite of this and of the sad fate that overtook it, Mr. Williams' comedy was one of the most interesting of the season. There were serious faults in the work, but those faults no more made "The Stolen Story" a bad play than a punctured tire makes an automobile a bad machine.

*General Cunningham*, a former cab-

inet officer, has mixed himself up with a number of city politicians for the purpose of passing a bill to provide the poor with certain water-front parks. Two schemers convert the measure into a steal by removing a comma from the draft when it is printed. *Harry Lascelles*, a reporter, unearths the plot, and collects blackmail from the conspirators. Unfortunately for his promise to keep the affair quiet, *The Great Billy Woods*, star man of a rival newspaper, gets his nose close to the trail, and starts out full speed for a story. Moreover, *Billy* is in love with *Florence Cunningham*, only daughter of the general, and is anxious to save the old gentleman from being compromised. *Lascelles* gets the situation in his hands by employing *Woods*, who has been dismissed from his own "sheet," and arranging to destroy the tale of trickery when it is turned in to him. Fate intervenes. *Woods* has worked on one paper for twenty years; what more natural than that, on a night when his mind is fully occupied with the bigness of his "scoop," he should go to his old desk to write? This he does, and for twenty minutes a dozen reporters, under orders from the city editor, maneuver to prevent *Billy's* realizing where he is and what he is doing. They succeed, the exposé is printed, *Woods* gets *Florence Cunningham*, and there ends a fourth act practically unrivaled for intensity and excitement.

The punctured tire in the piece is that comma. A comma, no matter if its bottom turns up like the trousers of a Londoner, is a slippery hook on which to hang a play. Your average audience is composed of Missourians; you can't ask them to take sides with one or the other of two sets of people struggling over—a comma! No one is informed how that single punctuation point translates craft into graft and honesty into dishonesty. Somebody is making heroic efforts to save somebody else. Do you applaud? Well, first, from what is somebody else being saved? From a comma! The *Lady-Who-Goes-to-the-Theater-With-Me* observed that the whole clever comedy

seemed to be sacrificed to a game of comma, comma, who's got the comma?

Jameson Lee Finney was *Billy Woods*, and did wonders with a difficult rôle. Sometimes the clever *William* was obliged to exhibit density regarding the affections of *Miss Cunningham* beside which our metropolitan drinking water is crystalline. If men in love were supposed to have the least common sense, drama would be impossible. Dorothy Tennant, late of "The College Widow," was a charming *Florence*; and Harry Stone, whose manner is a legitimate-comedy version of George Cohan's, lent a fitting personality to the rôle of *Lascelles*. Edwin Holt, whose last big hit was in "Arizona," gave a realistic and lifelike portrayal of a city editor; and that generally admirable actress, Beverly Sitgreaves, played an every-day society editress under the evident impression that a society editress is something like Hedda Gabler. A Genevieve Reynolds in the cast deserves mention. She proved to be, without exception, the worst actress I have ever seen. If you knew how many actresses I have seen, you would realize just how much distinction I am according Miss Reynolds.

The death of Adelaide Ristori last month added a new interest to the performance of "Paolo and Francesca" at the New Amsterdam. It was Madame Ristori who first presented this mediæval tragedy in America, in 1867, at the Fourteenth Street Theater. Another sentimental feature of the performance lay in the fact that it introduced as a star Henry B. Irving, son of the late Sir Henry Irving. Mrs. Irving (Dorothea Baird) appeared in the rôle of *Francesca*. The settings used were those employed by George Alexander at the St. James Theater, London, for which we have reason to congratulate ourselves; and the version of the play was used there, too, for which we have much less reason to congratulate ourselves.

Stephen Phillips' version of the ancient romance of *Paolo and Francesca* is a *Ladies' Home Journal* kind of a love-story, dealing with a simple, sac-

charine *Francesca*, and a blameless, boneless *Paolo*. The difference between Mr. Phillips' work and Boker's "*Francesca da Rimini*," is the difference between a spindle-legged gilt sofa and a sturdy oaken armchair. Mr. Phillips' plays make charming reading; but, as those persons know who saw "*Ulysses*," they are a disappointment when acted. "*Paolo and Francesca*" is graceful and poetic, but it is seldom dramatic, and never mighty. The attempt to make the relationship between the hero of the tragedy and its heroine almost innocuous is silly. Innocuous relationships do not end in tragedy. When our wife is a schoolgirl and her admirer a lad, we deprive the one of *matinée* tickets and spank the other; and that's as near tragedy as the matter ever gets. I for one refuse to accept as the types of those unhappy lovers, whose rapt embrace was unbroken by the tortures of eternity, a vacillating girl and a weak-chinned boy, of whose dead bodies their murderer could say: "They look like children asleep."

True as I maintain these things to be, the performance at the New Amsterdam was an exquisite delight. Mr. Irving, who looks and acts startlingly as his father did, was impressive in the rôle of *Malatesta*—a rôle in which Salvini and Barrett thrilled our parents; and in which we ourselves had the agreeable privilege of seeing Otis Skinner. E. Harcourt Williams and Dorothea Baird were adequate in the name parts, Miss Baird greatly resembling Watts' fine painting of *Francesca*. Maud Milton did some effective but unconvincing melodramatic acting in the rôle of the malevolent cousin who takes the place of the fool in the Boker version. The spirit of the whole undertaking was one of dignity, beauty, and intellectuality. Not that any one of these three attributes seems to appeal much to the average audience in New York. Passing out of the theater after the performance was over, I heard one cultured spectator remark: "The acting's all right, but the play ain't there." If the gentleman who uttered

that comment happens upon this article I can do him a service. I advise him to see Richard Carle in "*The Spring Chicken*."

Some time ago, when the dramatization of "*The Prince of India*" was first announced, I came upon *The Lady-Who-Goes-to-the-Theater-With-Me* in an hour devoted to reading. There were tears in her gentle eyes, and two books were lying on the library table beside her. One of the volumes was General Lew Wallace's novel, and the other was Mary Stewart Cutting's "*Little Stories of Married Life*."

"What was it that affected you so?" I asked. "Some word-painting of Wallace's?"

"No," she answered. "'*The Prince of India*' is wonderfully written, of course, but I know a woman who went through just what this poor wife suffered in '*The Terminal*.'"

"*The Terminal*" is among the "*Little Stories of Married Life*."

*The Lady-Who-Goes-to-the-Theater-With-Me* could have voiced no better criticism of the performance of "*The Prince of India*," at the Broadway—or of any of the several dramas of its kind. Klaw & Erlanger's production of the play is exhaustive and beautiful; J. I. C. Clarke's adaptation of the novel is majestic and impressive—but whose heart can be stirred at the reminder that *Mahommed II.* took Constantinople in 1453; and that with it he captured the heart of the *Princess Irene*? The wisest of us know Constantinople only as a dog and beggar infested municipality that we were asked to spell when we were youngsters; and the *Princess Irene* as a probable relative of Mrs. Harris.

Mr. Clarke has divided his story into six acts—one of them called a prologue—and eleven scenes, beginning with the adoption of *Lael* by the *Prince of India*, and ending with the betrothal of *Irene* and *Mahommed* and the fall of Constantinople. There isn't much use in relating the tale, even for the benefit of those who have not read the book, since it is simply a straightforward and unadorned romance of the love which

a Christian maiden feels for a follower of the religion of Islam. Mr. Clarke has written in blank verse, choosing the dramatic form of the Greek tragedies; and he handles his theme with lofty dignity and purity. "The Prince of India" is an admirable work, though I should not call it a good play.

The fault with the acting is its unvarying heroic tone. When moments of great emotion come, the company is unable to make them impressive because each of its members has spent his or her utmost feeling on the expression of nothings. Emmett Corrigan, who has the title-rôle, is the single exception to this rule. William Farnum's fine presence lends grace to *Mahommed*, Boyd Putnam is good as *Constantine*, Julie Herne is sweet in the part of *Lael*, and Adelaide Keim plays *Irene* in the fashion taught at schools of acting. Klaw & Erlanger's production is massive and beautiful; a panorama showing a storm on the Bosphorus and a scene representing the fall of Constantinople being particularly extraordinary.

A sparkling drop of dew on the grass may be as agreeable a sight as a vast cathedral; and a pretty little comedy often is more delightful than a great tragedy. When, however, it is apparent that the grass is made of colored hemp, and that the dew was painted on it, much of the charm of the picture is lost. Israel Zangwill's "Nurse Marjorie," in which Eleanor Robson is appearing at the Liberty, has a deal of quaint humor, but it is completely artificial. A pleasant evening's entertainment, it resembles Mr. Zangwill's "Merely Mary Ann" only as the colored hemp resembles grass. *Mary Ann* did the delightfully whimsical things she did because, to quote the nursery rime, it was her "nature to"; *Marjorie* does whimsical things because Mr. Zangwill thought they would bring laughter and applause.

*Nurse Marjorie* really is *Lady Marjorie*, daughter of the *Duke* and *Duchess of Donegal*. Having socialistic notions, she abandons society and takes up nursing in a hospital in the West

End of London. One of her patients there is *John Danbury, M. P.*, whose eyes have been bandaged following an operation on them, and who is bewailing his fate in being placed in charge of the homely woman whose face was the last he saw. *Nurse Marjorie* isn't homely—in fact, she is Eleanor Robson—and she and the audience have a good deal of fun over the mistake of *Mr. Danbury*. When that gentleman regains his sight, he falls head-over-heels in love with *Marjorie*, who tricks him by pretending to be the child of the Whitechapel fishwoman who was her foster-mother. *Danbury* stands the test, though his parents try to buy off the girl who has bewitched their son; but the discovery that *Marjorie* is an aristocrat sends him away in a rage. Subsequently, *Mr. Danbury* is "slightly wounded" by being shot in a place where the tap of a stick would have killed him; and once again *Lady Marjorie* becomes *Nurse Marjorie*. This time it is her parents who object; but love laughs at dukes as well as at locksmiths, and the plays ends happily.

There is much in the piece that is delicious, and there is much that is not. The comedy situation brought about by having a blindfolded man stroke the hand of a fishwoman under the impression that it belongs to his innamorata is too childish and too old for words. The same trick is played in A. H. Woods' production of "The Gambler of the West." There is a deal of exaggeration, and a deal of talk about "the peepul"; and there are puns and some business taken from "The Little Minister." Summed up, however, "Nurse Marjorie" is a very nice entertainment for an idle evening.

It would be too much to say that Miss Robson's *Marjorie* compares with her *Mary Ann*; but she is girlish and pleasing. Her brogue—when she remembers it—is agreeable; and, of course, so, too, is her personality. H. B. Warner, who plays the *M. P.*; Ernest Mainwaring, A. G. Andrews, Leslie Kenyon, and Kate Denin Wilson do excellent work in support of Miss Robson. Essex Dane, who sounds as though she



were a town in Kent, makes a fine *Duchess*, but she can't pronounce "incognito." Ada Dwyer is bad; and to describe Hassard Short, I must borrow a phrase from Alan Dale, who once said that somebody "made a fresh noise." Mr. Short is a terrible inflection, especially for two acts. These are the two in which he appears. I have left Reuben Fax until the last because I remember the Biblical injunction that "the last shall be first." Mr. Fax, who is one of the few good actors in America, is first—not only the first actor in Miss Robson's company, but the first actor of this season. His characterization of the plebeian shipbuilding father of *John Danbury* must be seen to be appreciated. The only two performances of recent years in New York that have excelled Mr. Fax's are David Warfield's *Von Barwig* and Frank Keenan's *Jack Rance*.

The one big dramatic triumph of the month was, "The Great Divide," which scored a sensational hit, and is packing the Princess Theater to the doors. Henry Miller and Margaret Anglin are the stars of the production, and every one who knows what they have been doing for the past three years must be glad that they have come to their own again. In this tiny down-town playhouse they have struggled valiantly, now making a little success, now suffering a little failure, always offering the best they knew and giving the most they had to give.

"The Great Divide" is from the pen of a Chicago college professor, named William Vaughn Moody; and it is in Chicago that it was first performed, about six months ago, under the title of "The Sabine Woman." The play is wonderfully strong throughout; and it has moments of positive genius. But for one weakness, it would be beyond comparison with the other new plays of the season—and that one weakness is a lack of inevitability. When a woman fairly wallows in woe, until you wonder if she doesn't take a voluptuous delight in it, that woe must be unavoidable, or the condition is improbable. The only valid criticism I have

heard against "The Great Divide" was voiced by Rennold Wolf, the remarkably clever writer on the *Morning Telegraph*, when he classed it among the "important-if-true dramas."

*Ruth Jordan* has gone to Arizona with her brother, *Philip*, and the first act of the play, which is its best act, occurs in their ranch-house. Circumstances take all the men from the locality, and *Ruth* is left, fearless and self-confident, to spend twenty-four hours alone. She goes into her bedroom to retire; you hear her singing while she disrobes, and, as she sings, you see through a window three ruffians, two Mexicans and an American, who have caught a glimpse of the girl. A moment later she returns to the stage. The business that follows is splendidly managed. *Ruth* hears a whistle outside the house. She bolts the door, blows out her candle, draws the curtain over the window, and peeps into the night. What meets her eye sends her to the wall for a rifle hanging there. The men break down the door, and, as they enter, *Ruth* pulls the trigger of her weapon repeatedly, but it misses fire. *Stephen Ghent*, the American, and his companions shake dice for the possession of their victim, who offers to marry him if he will save her from the others. The drunker of the Mexicans is bought off, but his countryman follows *Ghent* outside to settle the dispute with a revolver, while *Ruth* listens for the shots which will kill one of her captors and send the other back to her. *Ghent* returns, and she goes away with him.

The remainder of "The Great Divide" is devoted to the metamorphosis of *Ghent* from a beast to a man of nobility and beauty of character; and to showing how *Ruth* passes from horror and loathing to love. This would be powerful drama if we could ever get away from that lack of inevitability—if we could forget that neither law nor honor compelled *Ruth* to keep a promise made under the condition described. She had only to explain to the justice of the peace who married them, or to cry out in the village where the

wedding occurred. Or, failing that, Dakota is so near Arizona!

I venture to suggest that, virile as Mr. Moody's drama undoubtedly is, Mr. Miller and Miss Anglin deserve the lion's share of credit for its overwhelming success. The stage-management of the play is remarkable, and the settings that Mr. Miller has placed on the miniature stage of the Princess are as accurate, as atmospheric, and as imaginative as possible. The scene showing a house on the apex of the Catalina Mountains looks like the roof of the world with a hole in it. Miss Anglin, who is certainly one of our finest actresses, gives a remarkable performance of *Ruth*. The rôle calls for emotionalism throughout, and allows of no one great moment like that in the third act of "Zira"; but Miss Anglin acts with light as well as shade, and is convincing always. Mr. Miller's *Ghent* is a fine piece of work—perhaps the best he has done. Laura Hope Crews for the first time justifies the good things that have been said of her during the past three or four years; and the remainder of the company is effective.

In "The Love Letter," adapted from the French by Ferdinand Gottschalk and presented by Virginia Harned at the Lyric, Victorien Sardou has departed from the melodramatic writing that has engaged his attention of late, and has gone back to the happy lightness of "A Scrap of Paper." "The Love Letter" is a divorce comedy in three acts, two of which are scintillantly bright. That the third is not need be attributed neither to Sardou nor to Mr. Gottschalk. One cannot change the motive of a play from adultery to an innocent flirtation without losing some of its flavor. When all's said and done, we may consider ourselves fortunate in losing some of the flavor of "The Love Letter," since what remains in the dialogue is quite pepperish enough for the untrained American palate. The story of the play concerns the efforts of *Florence Revillon*, whose second husband finds a compromising note in her desk, to convince that gentleman of the fact that the *liaison* took

place, not in his time, but in the days of his predecessor. The untangling of this yarn involves a family visit to *M. Jobelin*, the first husband, and some deliciously droll side-lights on the ethics of divorce.

W. J. Ferguson's characterization of *M. Jobelin* is the joy of the production. Two years' advertising and the expenditure of a few thousand dollars will make a star; but it takes time and talent to make an actor. Not that Virginia Harned isn't an actress, and a good one; her *Florence* being bright and piquant in an unusual degree. William Courtenay, Albert Gran, Percy Lyndal, and Eleanor Moretti are capable members of the supporting cast. The scenic investiture is an unfailing pleasure to the eye.

N. C. Goodwin scored a personal success at the Bijou in "The Genius," which was presented last season by Henry Woodruff under the title of "The Genius and the Model." The play, which is by William C. and Cecil De Mille, concerns a wealthy young gentleman whose lady-love requires that the man she marries shall "do things." The young gentleman does them by proclaiming himself an artist, and by palming off as his own pictures that he has purchased from a poor but deserving painter. Considerable amusement is provoked by the consequent entanglement, and the piece is entertaining, if thin and unimportant. Mr. Goodwin's work is much on the order of that which he did in "An American Citizen"; and his performance is drawing good-sized audiences to the Bijou.

The month has been marked by the production of three musical comedies—"The Red Mill," at the Knickerbocker; "The Spring Chicken," at Daly's; and "My Lady's Maid," at the Casino. These have been successful, to quote the line that Augustus Thomas puts at the head of his casts of characters, "in the order of their appearance." Montgomery and Stone, whom you will recall as the *Scarecrow* and the *Tin Woodman* in "The Wizard of Oz," star in "The Red Mill," which has excited a veritable furore, and is crowding the

Knickerbocker. This doubtless is due partly to the fact that the piece arrived at the correct psychological moment—when “The Little Cherub” had exhausted itself, and the only other new musical “show” in town had been written down a failure. “The Red Mill” has many points of superiority, however; among them the fact that the tenor goes to jail early in the first act and doesn’t get out until the end of the performance. Henry Blossom’s libretto is original and consistently funny, including two lyrics, “You Never Can Tell About the Women” and “Every Day Is Lady’s Day With Me,” of far more than ordinary brightness. Victor Herbert’s score, of course, is musically and tuneful; its borrowed numbers having been borrowed from the previous works of the composer himself. One of these numbers, “When You’re Pretty and the World Is Fair,” a variation of Mr. Herbert’s intermezzo called “Al Fresco,” is dainty enough to justify the turning over of the barrel. Montgomery and Stone are barefaced comedians this year, appearing practically without make-up, and winning as many laughs as they did in “The Wizard of Oz.” Their burlesque of “Sherlock Holmes” shows real histrionic ability; and their boxing dance, added to a song entitled “In Old New York,” is a work of genius. Besides all these excellences, “The Red Mill” has five or six extremely pretty effects, chief among which may be mentioned a ballet of children, and an exquisite investiture. It has a chorus that was picked the year the peach crop failed.

In seriousness, I suppose that Mr. Carle *did* have a great deal to do with the success of “The Spring Chicken.” Several of the best songs in the entertainment are his; and doubtless many of the ingenious stage effects. It is these things that make the offering enjoyable, for the book is puerile, to say the least, and the story is a desert unobserved because it has so many oases. Emma Janviere’s rendering of a ditty yeapt “I Don’t Know, But I Guess,”

Mr. Carle’s singing of “A Lemon in the Garden of Love,” and Arthur Conrad’s dancing alone are worth the price of admission. In addition to these, the company includes Victor Morley, Bes-sie McCoy, and Blanche Deyo.

Madge Crichton brings to “My Lady’s Maid,” at the Casino, a comparatively fresh personality—a blessing not to be underestimated in a field where the same six or eight “Broadway favorites” are paraded unendingly. Miss Crichton has a charmingly crisp manner, and her daintiness, with the drollery of Joseph Coyne, lends attractiveness to an otherwise tame musical comedy. Mr. Coyne is seen as *Oroya Brown*, who may or may not be a relative of the railway train known as “The Royal Blue”; and his well-known method of fun-making is as potent as ever. It takes more than two players to make a success, however; and “My Lady’s Maid” is not doing the business usual at the Casino.

Of the other productions of the month there is no need of speaking at length. Ella Wheeler Wilcox’s Biblical tragedy, “Mizpah,” at the Academy, was said to have been written in blank verse, and proved to be a decidedly blank play. “John Hudson’s Wife,” in which Hilda Spong and William Hawtrey acted at Joe Weber’s, will have been gone five weeks when this magazine reaches the stands. “Popularity,” presented at Wallack’s, with Thomas W. Ross in the cast, was the first financial failure scored by George Cohan. It was interesting only in that it emphasized the limitations of the clever young author. The announcement of James J. Corbett in “The Burglar and the Lady,” shown at the American, tells all that any one can want to know about the attraction. “Man and His Angel,” in which Holbrook Blinn appeared at the Hackett, and “Barbara’s Millions,” in which Lillian Russell appeared at the Savoy, died within a fortnight after their birth of failure of the box-office receipts.

R. I. P.

# FOR BOOK LOVERS



# Archibald Lowery Sessions

The hero's valet a factor in society fiction. "Saul of Tarsus" a novel to be commended; the author knows her subject. "Bembo" an interesting tale of Italy. "The Fighting Chance," by Robert W. Chambers, a work of extraordinary finish. Frank H. Spearman's "Whispering Smith," well constructed and full of color and action. No lack of novelty in "The Rainy Day Railroad War," by Holman F. Day. "The Robberies Company, Ltd.," by Nelson Lloyd, rather fantastic and somewhat dry. Burton E. Stevenson's "Affairs of State" interesting and unpretentious. "Historic Hadley," by Alice Morehouse Walker, an attractive and very readable book. Charles G. D. Roberts' "The Heart That Knows," disappointing in some respects.



ADAME DE SEVIGNE is credited with having first given expression to the significant fact that "no man is a hero to his own valet." As a corollary to this proposition, we of the present day might add that no man can be a hero—in society fiction—without his valet; or, to be exact, "his man." And "his man," singularly enough, is always the same individual. To be sure, he appears under many aliases; he has a string of them longer than that possessed by the brightest light of the rogue's gallery; he may be known as Hawkins, Dawkins, Timpkins, Jenkins, or Simpkins, but in other respects he is always the same; with him there is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

In appearance he is well-nourished; neat, "sleek," smooth-shaven; his dress is neither shabby nor pronounced; in manner he is neither furtive nor demonstrative; and he is respectful, and subservient even, but not obsequious.

He is useful, very useful, not only to his various masters, but to many tellers of tales. He is deft and noiseless; he can remove the tea things without in-

terrupting the flow of conversation, no matter how intimate it may be, between the master and his feminine guest; a service in which his self-effacement is most conspicuous. He can pack a steamer-trunk, find out about trains, buy railroad or steamer tickets, mix cocktails, make beds, press or "lay out" clothes, and work other miracles.

He responds to a call at any time of day or night by "appearing in the doorway"; receives instructions with a supernatural comprehension of vital but unexpressed details; is never taken by surprise; is always "impassive" and unemotional, and sets himself about the execution of extraordinary and impossible tasks expeditiously and efficaciously, with no hint of wonder at the master's vagaries or curiosity at his motives. He listens attentively, and usually responds "Very good, sir." And when reproof is administered or abuse inflicted, his invariable reply is, "Very good, sir. Thank you, sir;" in which there is, however, not a trace of irony. At the conclusion of an interview he "retires silently."

Above all, he is "discreet." The hero takes that for granted, and acts accordingly; often in a way that leaves the reader in a state of anxious, though

pleasant, expectation; but the "man's" discretion never fails.

Such a character as this is a boon to the literary tile-layer. No matter how complicated the design of a society story may be, there is always a place in the mosaic which he will exactly fit. One character, at least, is at hand, ready-made; and to that extent the tension of really creative work is relieved.



The Bobbs-Merrill Company has published another book by Elizabeth Miller, who will be remembered as the author of "The Yoke," which the new tale, "Saul of Tarsus," resembles in nothing except that it, also, is a Biblical story. The period of the former was that of the Egyptian bondage; while that of the latter is, of course, at the beginning of the Christian era.

In spite of its title, "Saul of Tarsus" is a purely secular romance; for, though Saul's persecution of the early Christians supplies the motive power for the narrative and provokes its action, he himself appears only twice, once in the opening chapter and again in the reproduction of the scene on the road to Damascus.

The principal characters are Marsyas, a young Essene, whose progress through the book is animated by a spirit of fierce vindictiveness against Saul because of the latter's responsibility for the death of Stephen Herod, whose restoration to the throne of Judea Marsyas seeks in order to consummate his revenge upon Saul and Lydia, the daughter of the alabarch of Alexandria and a Christian convert.

The narrative takes the reader from Palestine to Alexandria and thence to Rome, and comes to a conclusion in Palestine. The thread of the story is distinct and simple, in spite of the shifting scenes and multiplication of minor characters; and hence the unity is well maintained. There are, of course, opportunities for many complications and much color, which, in less skilful hands, might easily produce confusion. But the author knows her subject so thor-

oughly that she keeps her story moving easily and logically to the conclusion.

It is, on the whole, a novel to be commended and read with interest.



Judging from the preface to "Bembo, a Tale of Italy," the author, Bernard Capes, has intended his story as a piece of symbolism. On the theory that "the whole cosmic system moves in cycles," and that "wherefore it is plain that to progress is necessarily to recover, in the course of time, the beginning of things," he has set for his youthful missionary the task of leading the world back to "a state and time before ever love knew betrayal of its innocence."

The magnitude of this task may be estimated by the fact that Bembo's propaganda was undertaken by him at the court of Milan, in 1476, the last year of the supremacy of Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza. A more unpromising attempt at reformation can scarcely be conceived, but that, of course, is necessary to give the book its interest. Bembo is a youthful fanatic, trained in a monastery, and allowed by his guardians to leave their protection and begin a warfare upon the almost incredible wickedness of the Milanese court, with no other weapons than his own youthful innocence and his abundant love of mankind.

The book is a study rather than a story. Mr. Capes has given a very vivid presentation of court life at Milan under the vicious despot, in order, apparently, to emphasize the contrast between the degradation of human sin and the elevating influence of love. And, though it must be confessed that the predominating tone of the picture is a rather somber one, Bembo's mission ending in disaster to himself, yet the general impression produced by the narrative is not one of pessimism, for the author has succeeded in preserving an undercurrent of faith, hope, and charity.

The style of the narrative is rather high-colored, but, considering the material to be handled, this is a virtue rather than a defect, because it is of vast

assistance to the reader to an accurate comprehension and feeling of the atmosphere of the period, locality, and characters. The book is interesting as a story and commendable as a purely literary achievement. It is published by E. P. Dutton & Co.



Among the many conspicuous excellences of Robert W. Chambers' book, "The Fighting Chance," D. Appleton & Co., the most impressive is the extraordinary finish in technical detail. Its polish is such as to arrest the attention of the most casual reader; in this respect the book is almost unique, and to those who delight in skilled craftsmanship it is a most satisfying piece of work.

This being the case, anything like criticism of the story will seem rather ungracious, and therefore, instead of making any positive statement, it will be sufficient to ask whether this very virtue is not a defect in so far as it tends to distract attention from the narrative to the style.

The story is one of contemporary New York, the New York of the Four Hundred, with which the seasoned reader of fiction is on the same terms of intimacy—almost—as any one in the inner chambers of the Holy of Holies. Stephen Siward and Sylvia Landis are the young people whose complications are used as the foundations of the plot; and, in spite of their environment, training, and opportunities, are very human, and, on the whole, lovable. The manner in which Sylvia, while still engaged to Quarrier, allows the affair between herself and Siward to drift from mere acquaintance into the warmest sort of relationships will hardly please some people; but it is pretty safe to say that, when Quarrier's cold-blooded calculation and hypocritical pretensions are taken into account, she will lack no sympathy that the average reader is capable of bestowing.

In point of real interest, the story equals the best that Mr. Chambers has hitherto done; and on the whole shows that his art has attained an approxima-

tion to perfection that has but seldom been equalled.



There is no lack of novelty in Holman F. Day's new story, "The Rainy Day Railroad War," published by A. S. Barnes & Co.

We have become accustomed to associating adventures connected with engineering achievements with a Western setting; chiefly with mining and railroading in the Rocky Mountains, but Mr. Day has refused to be bound by precedent, and laid the scene of his story in the logging camps of Maine.

The little railroad which Parker, the young engineer, has undertaken to build over the rough "carry" between Spinnaker Lake and West Branch River is a whim of two Western railroad officials; and the young man has been picked for the job on account of his demonstrated ability to handle men and overcome unexpected obstacles.

The difficulties that he encounters in the Maine woods are of the sort that must be met promptly and resolutely, and sometimes without much regard for legal formalities; a task that taxes the ingenuity and enterprise of the most resourceful.

In this story, the opposition of Colonel Gideon Ward, the autocrat of the district, is met by Parker's youthful determination in a manner that finally disarms and thoroughly tames the older man.

As may be supposed, the story is one of action, adventure, and excitement; and, though a little improbable in a few incidental matters, is one to be recommended.



It ought to be said that the allusions made to the book in some quarters as an imitation of "The House of Mirth" are unwarranted.

One of the best stories of Western life that has appeared since "The Virginian" is Frank H. Spearman's "Whispering Smith," Charles Scribner's Sons. Like the best of Mr. Spearman's previous work, this book has to do with mat-



ters of railway management and operation; specifically in this case, with the information or detective department of which Gordon or "Whispering" Smith is actually, if not ostensibly, the chief.

"Whispering" Smith is drawn into the tale by some of the consequences of a feud between George McCloud, a division superintendent, and Sinclair, a wrecking boss, who, upon his discharge by McCloud, organizes a band of bad men to prey upon the railroad company, and incidentally assist their leader to satisfy his grudge.

Whether or not any such man as Smith exists in real life is a matter that most readers will take little interest in. He and his kind have furnished too much entertainment in fiction to make their friends very inquisitive about what they actually are elsewhere. He is straight, fearless, marvelously skilful with his "gun," and believes in what goes under the much-abused term, "square deal." All of his qualities appear to advantage in the encounter in Williams Cache.

There are two pretty love-stories woven into the narrative, of which Dickie Dunning and Marion Sinclair are the heroines.

It is a well-constructed tale, with color and action enough to keep one in a state of breathless expectancy down to the death of Sinclair, Seagrue, and Rebstock.



If we are to believe everything we read and hear nowadays, we may be reasonably certain that a corporation is the embodiment of all that is dishonest and corrupt. The prevalent idea seems to be that they are all organized, in fact if not in name, to prey upon the helpless; and the eagerness shown by public men of all stations and conditions to deny association with them helps to confirm it.

"The Robberies Company, Ltd.," is, therefore, a title full of significance; it might almost be said to be generic. Whether the author of this book, who is Mr. Nelson Lloyd, has consciously perpetrated the sardonic jest of attributing,

to his robberies company, the purpose of benefiting the public does not appear.

The object of this corporation is purely educational; its promoters and managers seek to enforce the needed lesson that material possessions are really of little value; that gold-headed canes and pearl necklaces are rubbish; that the man who lays "traps for sweet food and strong wine," and sets "his heart on a horse or a rifle," is wasting his time. Their corporate activities, so far as this story is concerned, are devoted to bringing this lesson home to Captain Heberton Wade, whose position as a prominent social figure makes him a shining mark. The story, as may be imagined, is rather fantastic, and we are inclined to believe that most readers will find the discussions between the captain and Doctor Arden, the head of the robberies company, rather dry; they certainly retard the action unnecessarily.

The "love interest" is present, of course, otherwise the tale would have small chance of popularity. Charles Scribner's Sons are the publishers.



Burton E. Stevenson is a particularly consistent writer of entertaining stories. Without claiming to possess any specific knowledge on the subject, we are inclined to think that Mr. Stevenson does not pretend to do anything more than that; and doing it as well as he does he ought to be reasonably well satisfied. One of the attractive things about his manner is its utter lack of pretension.

His new book, published by Henry Holt & Co., is called "Affairs of State." It is less elaborate in plot than "The Marathon Mystery," and its chief characteristic is its sprightliness. This note is struck in the discussion, in the opening chapter, between the American millionaire, Rushford, and his two daughters, Susie and Nellie; a discussion which results in his acquisition temporarily of the hotel at the Dutch watering-place, Weet-sur-Mer.

This transaction precipitates the com-

plications which follow; and they follow without any delay, bringing into the tangle an English cabinet minister, a German princeling, a French detective, and various other individuals, who work together in hearty unanimity toward the consummation of the plot.

The two American girls carry off their parts creditably, and, it may be added, successfully, as they both succeed in winning titled husbands. The uncertainty as to the succession to the disputed principality is happily solved.



An attractive and very readable book is Alice Morehouse Walker's "Historic Hadley," published by the Grafton Press. Comparatively few people are fully aware of the flavor of romance connected with the early history, especially the colonial history, of American towns and villages. The blending of the heroic, the mysterious, and the marvelous, and the origin and development of tradition, make a very strong appeal to the imagination.

The story of Old Hadley has more than its share of this color. It was recognized by Sir Walter Scott, who used in one of his romances the facts connected with the refuge given by Parson Russell to two of the judges of Charles I. This story, which rests largely on tradition, is given in detail in Mrs. Walker's book as one of many absorbingly interesting incidents in the account of the little Massachusetts town.

The book is, presumably, one of the natural results of the genealogical and biographical researches conducted by the Grafton Press.



In some respects, Charles G. D. Roberts' story, "The Heart That Knows," published by L. C. Page & Co., is disappointing. The faults of the book have nothing to do with the author's conception of it, or with the materials used or their arrangement; these matters have all of the high qualities which we have a right to expect from an

author of the training and talents of Professor Roberts.

In the opening chapters, descriptive of the fishing settlement on the Bay of Fundy, Jim's desertion of Luella and her refuge with Mr. Goodridge, the rector of the parishes of Westock and Dorchester, the author has laid the foundations of a very strong story, but its results do not justify the anticipations raised by the introduction, and by Professor Roberts' recognized abilities. The disastrous consequences of Melissa's intriguing, the birth of Luella's son, the difficulties of her life in Westock, the devotion of Mr. Goodridge and his wife, the voluntary exile of Jim, and the outcome of it all, offer an unusual opportunity to make a great story. The one thing lacking is that element of human vitality that often elevates the most commonplace plot into something that is really worth while.

The results could have been accepted more as a matter of course if the author's literary art had not so often stood the test.



### Important New Books.

- "Rich Men's Children," Geraldine Bonner, Bobbs-Merrill Co.
- "Jewel Weed," Alice Ames Winter, Bobbs-Merrill Co.
- "Don-a-Dreams," Harvey J. O'Higgins, Century Co.
- "Harding of St. Timothy's," Arthur Stanwood Pier, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.
- "The Beloved Vagabond," W. J. Locke, John Lane Co.
- "Shorty McCabe," Sewell Ford, Mitchell Kennerley.
- "The Railway Children," E. Nesbit, Macmillan Co.
- "The Charlatans," Bert Leston Taylor, Bobbs-Merrill Co.
- "A Midsummer Day's Dream," H. B. Marriott-Watson, D. Appleton & Co.
- "Prisoners," Mary Cholmondeley, Dodd, Mead & Co.
- "The Prince Goes Fishing," Elizabeth Duer, D. Appleton & Co.
- "The Day's Journey," Netta Syrett, A. C. McClurg & Co.
- "The White Plume," S. R. Crockett, Dodd, Mead & Co.
- "Three Speeds Forward," Lloyd Osbourne, D. Appleton & Co.
- "Jane Cable," George B. McCutcheon, Dodd, Mead & Co.



## Chuck It

If you have been wearing an ugly mask put it away and let your friends enjoy seeing the *real* person now and then, at least. A physician describes some of the effects of coffee thus:

"In some cases the skin becomes sallow and more sensitive to cold; digestion is impaired; appetite gradually wanes; sleep is obtained with difficulty and does not refresh the individual; liver and kindred complaints occur and a kind of joylessness that throws a dark shade all over God's lovely nature."

It is easy to lay aside the "Coffee face" if well-made

# POSTUM

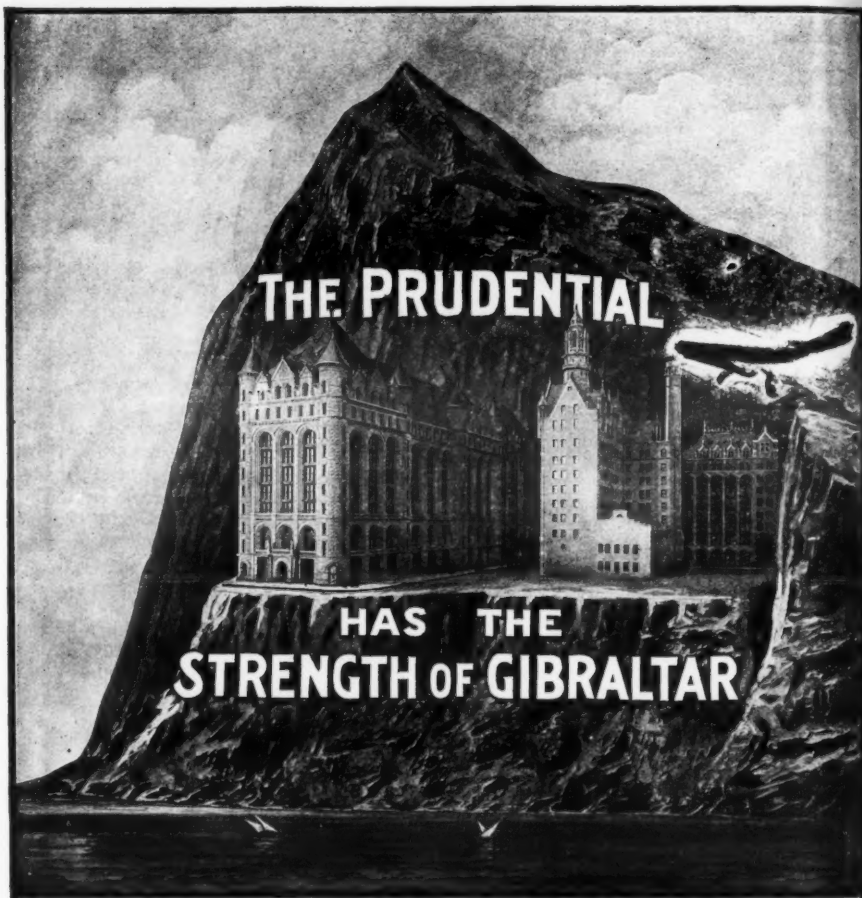
is used instead of ordinary coffee.

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Millions select Schlitz beer because it is thoroughly aged and will not cause biliousness. Because it is clean, filtered and sterilized. We even filter the air that cools it.

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See that the cork or crown  
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## The Beer That Made Milwaukee Famous.

# This Razor must pay for itself before You Pay me a Penny



*I am the man you hold  
personally responsible for  
every promise made in  
this advertisement.*

## P. C. SHERMAN

home and business address—and in any manner that is convenient or agreeable to you introduce yourself to me.

I'll take all the risk and send, prepaid, a Sterling Safety Razor with 24 blades, or an Old Style Interchangeable Razor with 12 blades.

You see the Sterling Razor is so much better than any other razor that I can afford to send one without any payment or deposit.

When you have tested it 7 days, if you find it the finest and easiest shaving razor you ever used, keep it. Then the razor must pay for itself—that's my new plan.

You see, the average man should be shaved at least three times a week—at 15c. a shave that's 45c. a week for shaving.

So, if you decide to keep the razor, all I ask you to pay me is what you'd pay the barber—45c. a week for a few weeks until the razor is paid for.

That way I make the barber buy the razor. At that my razor doesn't take any more money to pay for itself than you would have to pay out of your own pocket for an ordinary razor.

And I go even farther. I see to it that your blades are kept sharp forever—free.

With any other safety razor you are always paying out money because you must keep on paying for new blades or resharpening as long as you live.

But with the Sterling all you do is, send me 12 dull blades, at any time, with 10 cents to cover mailing expenses, and I return them to you perfectly sharp free of charge.

That's really "no honing and no stropping." Did you ever hear of anything as clever as this in the razor line?

It's this way—the reason I can make this offer is because I'm not the doubtful or afraid of my razor.

My STERLING blades are made of the finest razor steel that money can buy—costs me twice as much as the steel used in any other razor blades.

And mine is the only razor on the market that is made of genuine Sheffield steel—that is not a cold rolled steel.

WILL you let me send you a razor—without a cent deposit? Then I will keep it sharp and keen for the rest of your life free.

That's my plan—my new plan of selling razors.

No other razor makers in the world sell razors this way—because they can't—their razors won't stand it. Mine will—it's the way it's made.

Now, I don't say, "Send me the price of the razor, and if, after you have tried it, you find that it isn't all I claim, I will send your money back."—Not me.

On a "money back" proposition you may feel that there was some chance of not getting your money back if you wanted it—I won't let you feel that way about my razor.

For if the razor don't do all I say, you send it back at my expense, and you're out nothing, for you've paid me nothing and you owe me nothing.

Simply do this—Send me your name, occupation,



With my careful, systematic process, each STERLING blade is hardened, tempered, ground and honed in oil, and then hand stropped—so that my razor must hold its edge.

And each of my STERLING blades must pass the SHERMAN test, the most rigid test to which a razor blade can be subjected.

I must make certain that the temper and cutting edge of every STERLING blade is perfect and lasting.

I cannot afford to pass any but faultless razor blades, because I send you the razor, prepaid, for free trial without any deposit but your name, address and the introduction. If you don't introduce yourself to me I will have to write you to do so, and that will delay shipment of the Sterling.

After you have tried it for a week, you can buy the Sterling Razor for \$5.00 cash or postal order, but I am willing to let it pay for itself.

Now—write me to-day, stating whether you wish the Safety or Old Style Interchangeable, and let me send you the razor. State whether you wish to cut close or medium, and whether your beard is wiry or fine. Don't send me any money—only a postal.

Remember the razor is yours for a week free—then either keep it and let it pay itself, or return it to me sharp forever—free—or return it to

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Dept. 58, 281-283 Water St., New York City.

You have not seen this advertisement for the past 6 months because of the enormous volume of orders received last spring. We have been compelled to increase our factory capacity a hundred fold and am now in a position to fill any number of orders promptly.





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WE have published a sixty-four-page book; "Entertaining with Cards."

We want to send you a copy, with our compliments.

It describes and pictures hundreds of novel entertainments with cards—goes into details regarding invitations, arrangements, cards, decorations, costumes, favors, ways for finding partners, tally cards, rules, prizes, menus—everything necessary to make each entertainment a pronounced success.

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For a Grand Party there are many appropriate backs, particularly the *Minuet*, and for this season of the year, the *Mistletoe* back is very suitable.

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We will send you a handsome pack of cards if you will suggest any new and suitable form of card entertainment or any novel feature for card parties not found in our book.

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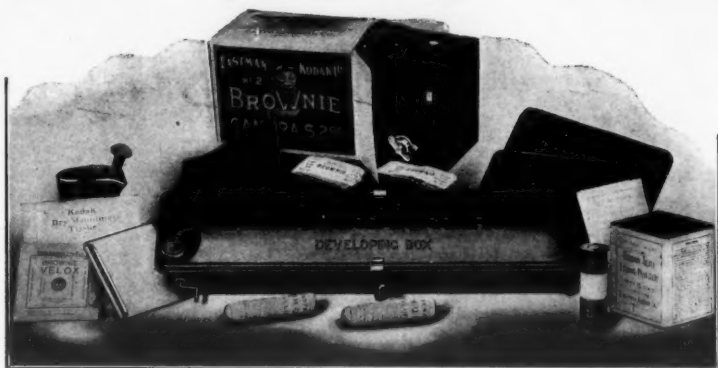
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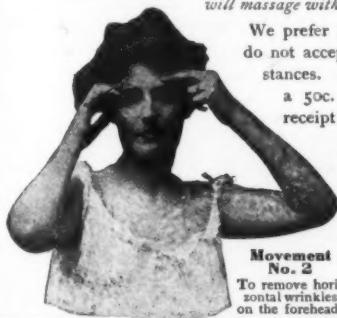
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*Suggest to your brother or husband that he try Pompeian Massage Cream after shaving; by cleansing the pores of soap it allays irritation and does away with soreness. All leading barbers will massage with Pompeian Massage Cream—accept no substitutes.*

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To remove horizontal wrinkles on the forehead.

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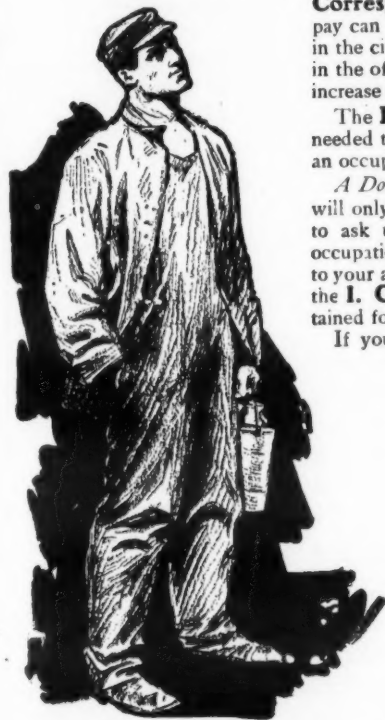
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# Ainslee's Magazine in 1907

“THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS”

---

**Q** The publishers of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE have arranged a program for the entertainment and diversion of its readers during the coming twelvemonth, which will show a further material advance of the standards governing its policy.

**Q** The multitude of readers of the magazine has been attracted to it and remains faithful for no other reason than for its unquestioned merit. That, indeed, is the only sure reliance that the magazine has, for in the nature of things it has none of the advantages—or disadvantages—of periodicals which use special articles and illustrations. It has won its place of distinction and success without the use of the “muck-rake.” It has no sensational revelations to offer its readers. Its development has not been the growth of a night. Public approval has been sought and acquired by means of the consistent excellence of the fiction published.

**Q** The publishers deeply appreciate the more than cordial reception which has been and continues to be, with gratifying unanimity, extended to AINSLEE'S, and they realize that they can respond to it only by keeping the magazine up to the standards by which its reputation has been built and maintained.

**Q** They have, therefore, made their plans for the coming year with these things in mind, and can give their friends the unqualified assurance that the twelve months of AINSLEE'S for 1907 will make a new and higher record, not only for AINSEEE'S, but for magazine fiction in general.



## Beauty Is Skin Deep

A YOUNG lady went golfing the other day—arrived on the field with a brilliant complexion, *noticeably brilliant*.

Played around the links a couple of times, wiped a good deal of perspiration from her face—And lo—our brilliant complexioned young friend became sallow and yellow—altogether a different looking creature.

Do you know what was the matter? Well our young friend was simply a victim of the Paint and Powder Habit—the curse of many a fair satiny skin—the *ruination* of many a young girl's beauty.

You see, most of us have a wrong idea about our skin. We think it is simply a covering for the body.

Well, our skin does act

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There are 28 miles of sanitary drainage system in the skin—the glands or pores—and every 24 hours this drainage system should discharge at least 2 pounds of waste matter. When Miss Brilliant Complexion covers her face and sometimes her body with a fine, dusty, pore-choking powder, she simply clogs up the skin pores altogether. Then the trouble starts.

Now, it's the easiest thing in the world to preserve that great gift of beauty—all you need is simply pure, high-grade soap and water.

But, for mercy's sake, don't use any old soap. The best soap is not merely a "pure" soap, for soap can be pure and yet made of cheap and injurious materials. It must be made from the *highest grade* of the purest materials.

There is only one such soap and that is Fairy Soap. Fairy Soap is made of the same kind of sweet and fresh beef fat that you get from your butcher on your roast of beef, together with the purest of vegetable oils properly balanced.

It will dissolve out all impurities in your pores—so that they can readily perform their daily function. Its use keeps the complexion fresh, clear, bright and healthful—almost indefinitely.

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**STRONGEST**—Made of second-growth white ash and steel. Practically indestructible. Prevents wet feet and doctor's bills.

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All who enter get a reward. Write for particulars.

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JANUARY

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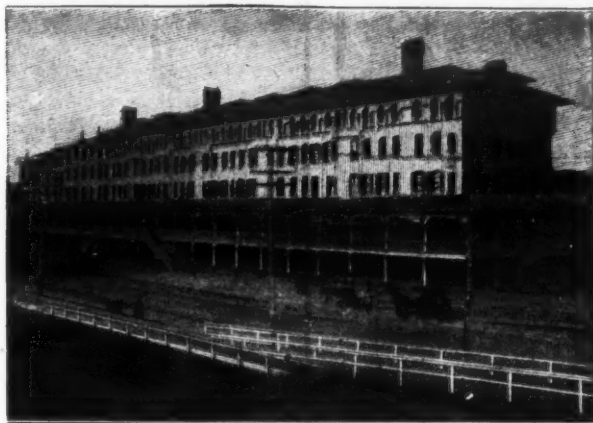
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Reduced from the full-page color illustration by EMIL HERING in THE DECEMBER METROPOLITAN MAGAZINE

## The METROPOLITAN MAGAZINE

R. H. RUSSELL, Publisher

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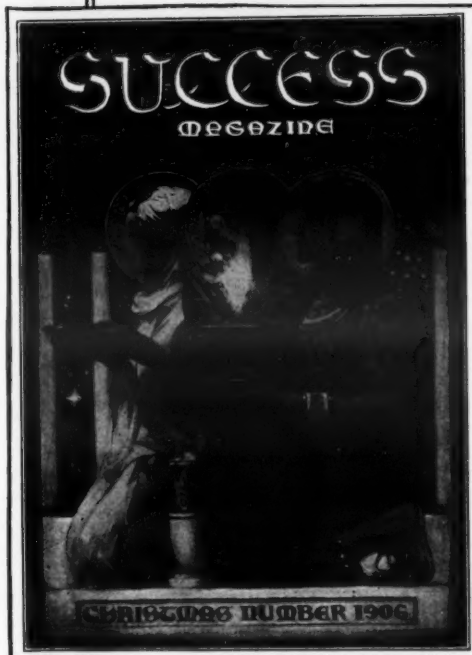
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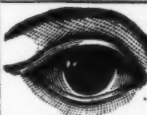


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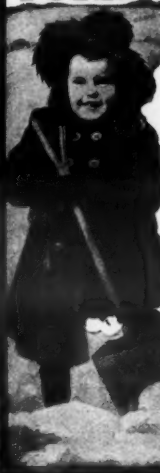
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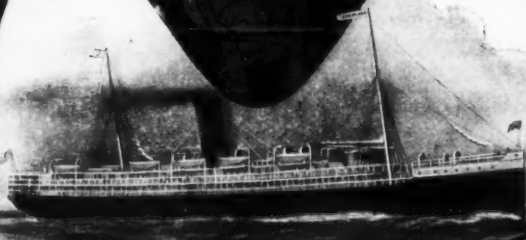
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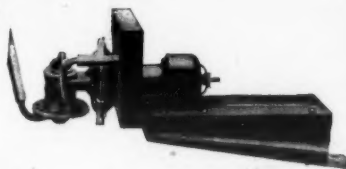


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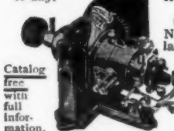
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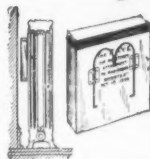
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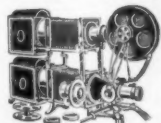
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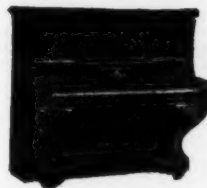
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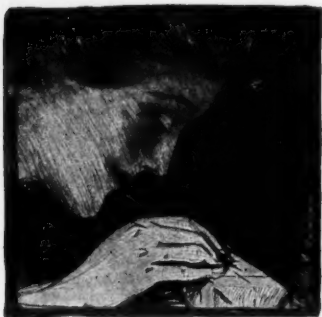
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**B. M. SINCLAIR** will have a Western story, "*The Red Ink Maid*," which for strength, romantic beauty and originality has not been surpassed by any of the noted writers who deal with that absorbingly interesting section of the country.

**ANNE WARNER** will have an immensely amusing story called "*The Bride's Prevision*," which tells of some of the funny experiences that weddings bring to the relatives of the brides and grooms.

A charming story of child interest, entitled "*The Mistletoe*," will be contributed by **GEORGE HIBBARD**.

**GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER'S** story, "*The Substitute Clown*," is one that has enough solid entertainment to fill two or three books. He has had a great many stories published, first and last, but he never excelled this one.

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"*Yesterday's Reckoning*," by **JANE W. GUTHRIE**, is an extremely strong story of the conflict of masculine and feminine wills.

**KATE JORDAN** will contribute another very strong tale, "*In Snow and Candlelight*."

Other stories will be by **JOHNSON MORTON**, **CONSTANCE SMEDLEY** and **MARTHA McCULLOCH WILLIAMS**.

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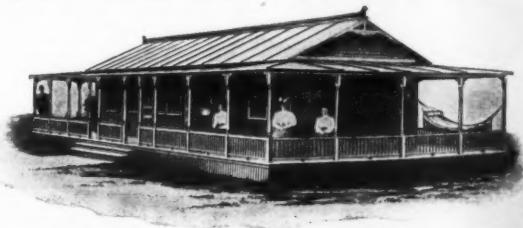
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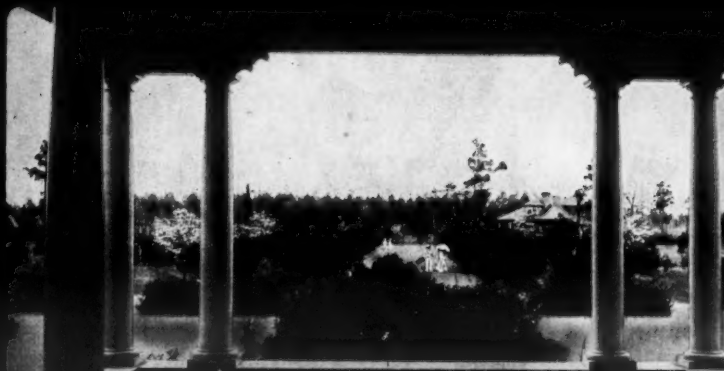


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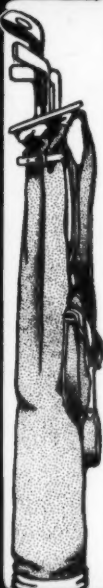
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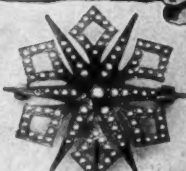




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no present can be more satisfactory to the receiver than some article of the Peacock standard of quality and workmanship—nor of greater pleasure to the giver in his recollection of having given good gifts purchased from a house pre-eminent alike for the superiority of its merchandise and the reasonableness of its prices.

The articles here shown in their full size are only samples from our immense stock of

**Jewelry: Diamonds: Silverware: Plated Ware:  
Cut Glass: China and Leather Goods**

Any of them will be sent post or express paid, with the understanding that the price will be cheerfully returned without argument if you are dissatisfied in any way. Goods will be sent C. O. D. subject to examination if desired.

### Our Shopping Guide of the Peacock Store

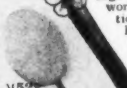
a beautiful book of two hundred pages containing about five thousand five hundred photo engravings from "life"—not from touched up drawings—is now ready and will be mailed free to any address in the world. For completeness—for beauty—for practical use in the selection of articles suitable for souvenirs and gifts on any occasion, we know of no other publication like it. Shopping by mail from it can be done at your ease. Our paramount reputation for over 60 years in this line affords you a gratifying sense of assured satisfaction, enhanced by the knowledge that all goods may be returned if you are not completely satisfied.

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M526 Sterling Silver  
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**That's Speed;** and it has won the difficult 300 mile road races for the Vanderbilt Cup two years in succession — **That's Reliability.** Those victories were won in some cases by special cars, but the same genius and skill that designed and constructed those perfect mechanisms has been primarily directed toward the development of an ideal chassis

## 1905

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## 1906

for touring cars and limousines that would likewise surpass all precedents for noiselessness, comfort, economy and reliability. For simplicity of construction, consistency of speed and easy handling, the Darracq stands alone in the Automobile World.

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The Darracq has more speed and road records to its credit than any other make in the world.

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# Pabst Extract Calendar for 1907

This charming panel shows in richest coloring the vivacious health and beauty of the women who achieve and maintain physical perfection by the aid of

## Pabst Extract

The "Best" Tonic

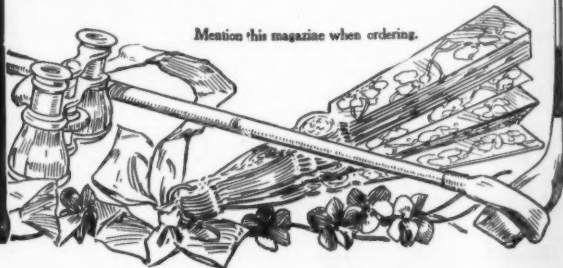
For those who are run down, fagged-out, over-worked, nervous, anæmic and languid, Pabst Extract, rich in the food extractives of malt and the tonic properties of hops, is not only The "Best" Tonic, but a healthy, wholesome food, giving strength and vitality to the entire system.

This handsome art calendar, size 7½x36 inches, is exquisitely printed in seventeen colors and is a striking example of Bryson's best style in portraying the American Girl. It is free from advertising and makes a most charming decoration for the library, den or office.

The calendar will be sent, postpaid, to any address upon receipt of 10c in coin or stamps. Address

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Mention this magazine when ordering.



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ARE THE BEST  
Half-Hose

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\$1.50

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And For All Times.

"RELIABLE DEALERS EVERYWHERE SELL **Shawknit** SOCKS."

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for Every Member of the Family  
Every Week

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Every new subscriber who cuts out and sends at once this slip (or mentions this publication) with \$1.75 for *The Youth's Companion* for the fifty-two weeks of 1907 will receive

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All the issues of *The Companion* for the remaining weeks of 1906, including the beautiful Double Holiday Numbers.

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The  
Music Master  
Plans a  
Christmas  
Surprise



# COLUMBIA Graphophone

As the pleasure grows upon the Music Master, so  
it grows upon the whole family.

**CHRISTMAS!** It is in the air. My friends, they demand of me, "What shall I give to the children for the fete of Christmas?"

On the instant there comes to me the great idea, "Attend! We are all children at the Christmas. You will make one gift for them all, the big ones and the little."

"One gift for all! Impossible. How then?"

"I tell you. It is this way: One gift, **A Columbia Graphophone**, with those **Columbia Records** which make the so perfect music,—songs of Christmas, of the Opera, of the Vaudeville,—music of all instruments. Stories that make the entertainment, the drollery. Me! I laugh with pleasure at the thought. It is an idea of the greatest—One gift for the whole family—**The Columbia Graphophone.**"

If you have no talking machine buy a **Columbia**, if you have another make, buy **Columbia Records**.

We don't ask you to pay cash for your Holiday purchases. Buy your **Columbia** outfit from any dealer or at our stores in all the large cities and pay when the burdens of your Christmas expenses are past.



**COLUMBIA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, Gen'l**  
**353 West Broadway, New York.**

Grand Prix Paris 1900

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### *Use Bon Ami.*

When coarse scouring soaps are used for cleaning, manufacturers are accused of not making their wares as durable or lasting as they used to—tins “wear out” faster than they ought—paint wears off before it should—metals and enamelled-ware are scratched and look worn.

Is this just to the manufacturers? Or, is it practicing household economy? “No,” you say. Then avoid coarse scouring soaps and

*Use Bon Ami*, the improved cleaner.

It is coarse enough to remove the dirt or tarnish easily, but too fine to scratch or “wear out” any surface.

Kitchen-ware cleaned with *Bon Ami* looks best because it is not scratched, and lasts longest as it is not worn out by the cleaning. In every household using *Bon Ami* economy is practiced and manufacturers are not accused of making poor wares.

# Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen

The pen with the Clip-Cap



Solves the  
Xmas problem



## Style A and D

Plain or Gilded

No.	Price
A 12 or D 22	\$2.50
A 13 or D 23	\$3.50
A 14 or D 24	\$4.00
A 15 or D 25	\$5.00
A 16 or D 26	\$6.00
A 17	\$7.00
A 18	\$8.00

## Style B

Plain or Gilded

German Silver Clip

No.	Price
B 12 With Clip	\$2.75
B 13	\$3.75
B 14	\$4.25
B 15	\$5.25
B 16	\$6.25
B 17	\$7.25
B 18	\$8.25

## Style C

GOLD BANDS

Plain or Gilded

No.	Price
C 12 G.M.	\$3.50
C 13 G.M.	\$4.50
C 14 G.M.	\$5.00
C 15 G.M.	\$6.00
C 16 G.M.	\$7.00

\*See price of Clip in next column.



## Style E GOLD BANDS

Plain or Gilded

No.	Price
E 22 G.M.	\$3.50
E 23 G.M.	\$4.50
E 24 G.M.	\$5.00
E 25 G.M.	\$6.00
E 26 G.M.	\$7.00

## Style F SILVER FILIGREE

With Nameplate

No.	Price
F 12 Fil.	\$5.00
F 14 Fil.	\$7.00
F 15 Fil.	\$8.50
F 16 Fil.	\$9.50
F 17 Fil.	\$11.00
F 18 Fil.	\$12.00

## Style G GOLD BANDS

Plain or Gilded

No.	Price
G 2 G.M.	\$3.50
G 3 G.M.	\$4.50
G 4 G.M.	\$5.00
G 5 G.M.	\$6.00
G 6 G.M.	\$7.00

CLIPS ADD TO COST—

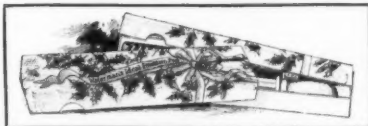
German Silver 25-
Sterling Silver 50-
Rolled Gold \$1.00
Solid Gold \$2.00.

Unit figures in all numbers indicate size of gold pen contained in holder.

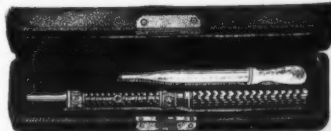
## For Man or Woman - Boy or Girl

The Christmas problem is to find a suitable gift. Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen solves this problem because it means pleasure to the giver and satisfaction to the user, whether man or woman, boy or girl. To the woman in search of a gift for a man this pen will come as a particularly appropriate suggestion. It is of service everywhere and becomes more valuable as time goes on. With a present of this kind goes the satisfaction of having given the best because—there are imitations. Insist on the genuine.

## CHRISTMAS PRESENTATION BOXES



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FOR GOLD MOUNTED PENS

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